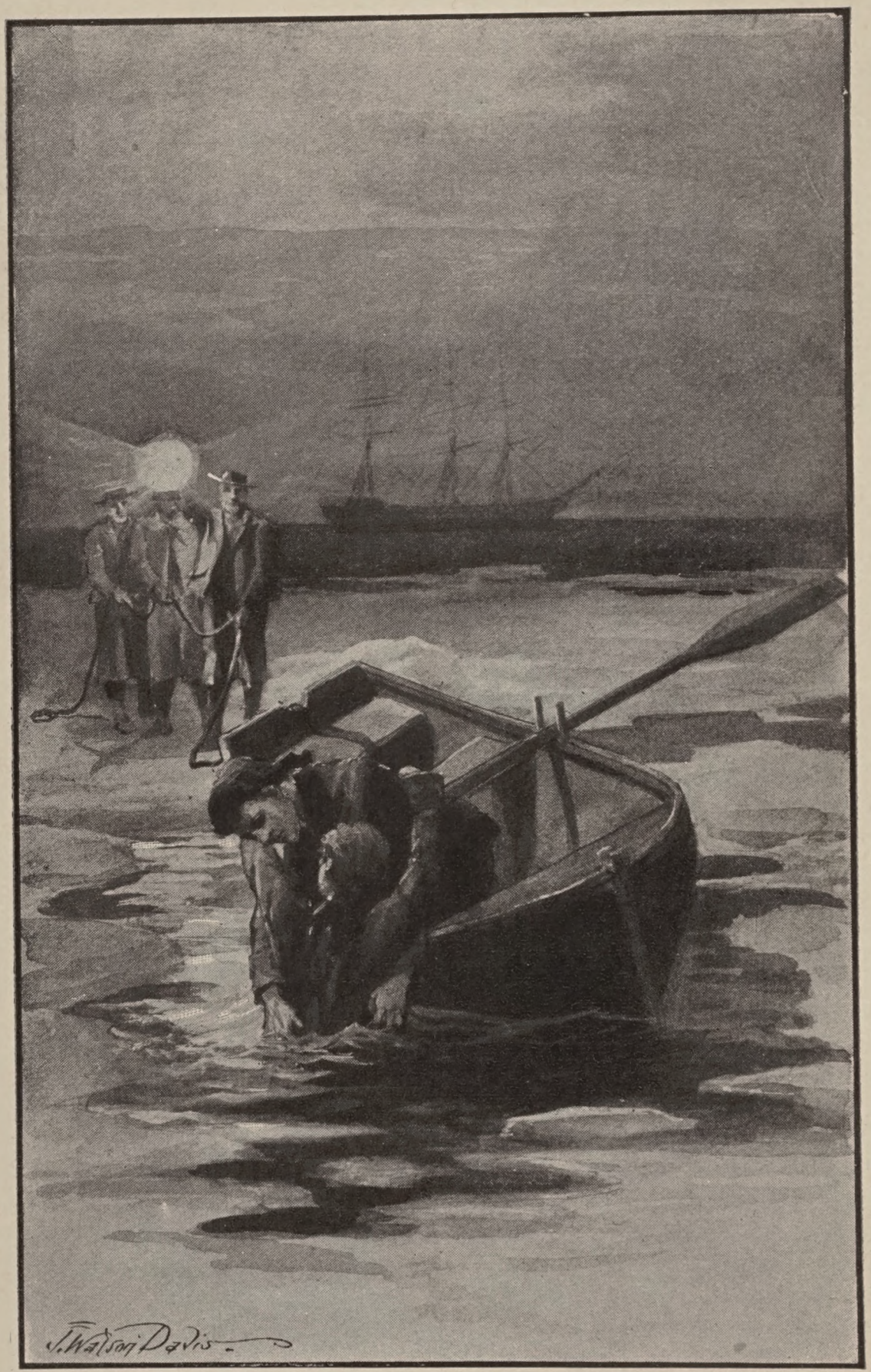
TWO YANKEE MIDDIES

BY WILLIAM P. CHIPMAN



It was a hard task to pull the almost unconscious lad over the side of the skiff, but Sam succeeded in doing it. Page 105.

TWO YANKEE MIDDIES

A STORY OF THE FIRST CRUISE OF AN AMERICAN SQUADRON IN 1775

By WILLIAM P. CHIPMAN

Author of "The Young Minuteman," "A Brave Defense," "A Daring Capture," etc., etc.

With Six Page Illustrations by J. Watson Davis

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Game of Hide and Seek	7
II.	A New Acquaintance	26
III.	An Important Discovery	46
IV.	The Breaking of the Pennant	65
V.	A Perilous Undertaking	83
VI.	Valuable Information	102
VII.	An Unsuccessful Ruse	121
VIII.	A Reconnoiter	138
IX.	Discovered	159
X.	The Lead of the *Alfred*	178
XI.	A General Stampede	196
XII.	A Bold Resolve	218
XIII.	The Missing Stores	242
XIV.	Homeward Bound	262
XV.	The *Glasgow*	286

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

It was a hard task to pull the almost unconscious lad over the side of the skiff.....FRONTISPIECE

PAGE

Under reefed jib and mainsail the stanch vessel dove into the huge waves..... 10

"Lads, this is my brother, Captain Fanning,"..... 55

"Cover the upper man, and I'll look out for the lower one," said the lieutenant..... 150

"Lieutenant Jones, is that you?"..... 200

Lifting the musket and pointing it at at the fellow, Tom replied, "I am a Continental officer."..... 256

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

"On December 22, 1775, a resolution was passed by the Continental Congress creating a Colonial Navy. By its provisions Ezek Hopkins of Rhode Island was made the senior officer with the rank of Commodore, and four ships were ordered into commission. These were: *The Alfred*, Dudley Saltonstall, captain, Paul Jones, first lieutenant, and Benj. Seabury, second lieutenant; *The Columbus*, Abraham Whipple, captain, Rhodes Arnold, first lieutenant, and Joseph Olney, second lieutenant; *The Andrea Doria*, Nicholas Biddle, captain, Eli Stansbury, first lieutenant, and Elisha Warner, second lieutenant; *The Cabot*, John B. Hopkins, captain, Halsted Hacker, first lieutenant, and Thomas Weaver, second lieutenant. . . . On Feb. 17, 1776, the little fleet left port, cleared Cape Henlopen, and stood to the southward and eastward on a cruise to the Bahamas."

—Condensed from Buell's Life of Paul Jones.

"Ezek Hopkins was commissioned in December, 1775, as Commodore and Commander-in-chief of the Continental Navy. Putting to sea in February, 1776, with a squadron of four ships he sailed to the Bahamas, and captured the forts on the island of New Providence with eighty cannon and large stores of ammunition."

—*Extract from Encyclopedia Americana.*

It is the story of that cruise which this volume aims to tell. Tom Foster and Sam Lyman are midshipmen on the *Alfred*, and, under the leadership of the indomitable Paul Jones, who was so soon to become famous in American Naval History, they meet with thrilling experiences on land and sea. The best historical authorities have been consulted, and the author believes he has given here a true picture of an incident little known, yet of considerable importance to the Continental forces because of the large quantity of military stores obtained.

William P. Chipman.

TWO YANKEE MIDDIES.

CHAPTER I.

A GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK.

It was the first day of December, 1775. Thick clouds covered the sky; a sharp chill was in the air; a heavy wind tossed the sea into foam; a storm was close at hand, and the white flakes which now and then swept along before the stiff breeze suggested snow.

But this was not the only danger which threatened the little packet-boat bound from Machias to Salem. Early that afternoon, as she ran by the north end of Matinicus, she had fallen in with a British frigate which immediately gave chase.

Confident that his sloop could outsail the larger craft before the wind, Captain Lewis put

about and kept to the eastward until clear of the island, then, with the north wind at his heels, he took a course straight out to sea.

Before he had gone five miles, however, he discovered that he had underrated the sailing qualities of the frigate. Her large spread of canvas more than made up for her greater size and weight, and it was clear that she was slowly overhauling him. So he changed his course again, this time to the west, having in mind a plan which he now proceeded to make known to two lads who stood near him on the quarter-deck, and who were evidently his passengers.

"I'll tell ye, boys, what I'm up to. In 'bout three hours 'twill be dark an' stormin' like great guns. The two'll come together, or my name ain't Jerry Lewis. So I'm goin' to keep that redcoat followin' me round the isle 'til the night an' the storm are here; then I'll slip away in the darkness an' put the *Polly* into as snug a harbor as ye ever saw, where we can outride the gale, an' 'scape the pryin' eyes of the Britisher at the same time."

"I guess you are going to make for Monhe-

gan, Captain," the older of the two lads replied with a laugh.

"Sure! Ever ben thar?" asked the skipper with evident interest.

"No, sir; that is, not into the harbor," the youth answered. "But, when Sam and I were on the *Liberty* we heard Captain O'Brien speak of a safe haven there, especially from all northerly winds. But can you make it in the darkness?"

"I can if we have snow enough to whiten the islands 'fore we get thar," the officer asserted. "Ye see the dark streak 'tween the two lighter ones will be the passage, an' in we'll go slicker than grease."

The sloop was now beyond the south end of Matinicus, and Captain Lewis himself took the helm, while he sent his mate forward to help the two seamen, who constituted the crew of the vessel, to trim the sails for a beat up the west shore of the island. The wind had steadily freshened; the cold had become more intense; and the snowflakes, changed by the lower temperature into bits of ice, came oftener

and with a stinging force. It was clear the undertaking would be a difficult and a disagreeable one.

Under reefed jib and mainsail the stanch vessel dove into the huge waves, her plucky captain running, in his tacks, as close into the wind as he could, and yet make headway. This maneuver enabled him to gain on the frigate, which was compelled not only to take in much of her canvas, but to keep several points farther off the wind. When, therefore, the north end of the isle was again reached, the sloop was at least a mile ahead of the chasing craft.

"We gained on that stretch, lads, an' p'rhaps the Britisher 'll give up the chase," Captain Lewis remarked as he surrendered the helm to his mate for the second run to the eastward.

But he was mistaken. With dogged persistency the frigate came on, and when a half-hour later the south course was taken, she threw out all the canvas she could carry in the heavy breeze, as though she remembered the vantage she had on her previous run before the wind, and was determined to overhaul her prey before she

Under reefed jib and mainsail the stanch vessel dove into the huge waves—but with dogged persistency the frigate came on. Page 10. *Two Yankee Middies.*

could make the westward turn at the lower end of the island.

But so skilfully did the Yankee skipper handle his little craft, there was no perceptible change in the distance between the vessels when the south end of Matinicus was reached, and the turn about it made. The beat to the northward was but a repetition of that which had taken place earlier in the afternoon, except the increasing wind rendered it more difficult. When it was finished, however, the sloop had gained an additional half-mile on her pursuer; and here the night and the storm, for which Captain Lewis was waiting, came.

Instead of running across the east end of the isle again, therefore, he kept on towards the main coast as though his object was to find a harbor from the storm somewhere in Penobscot bay. But when the darkness had shut the frigate wholly from view, he once more put about, and took a southwest course for Monhegan, twenty miles away.

With the wind abeam, for it had now shifted into the northeast, and with blinding sheets of

snow chasing her up and sweeping along her deck, the *Polly* sped on through the tossing sea. Her commander held her tiller until satisfied his last move had been unnoticed by the enemy, then putting her into the care of his mate with orders to keep her on her present course for an hour and then to call him, he turned to his passengers, who, notwithstanding the severity of the storm, were still on deck, saying:

"We'll go below now, lads, and see if Atus can't find us somethin' to eat."

They were soon in the warm cabin, where they found the negro cook already busy preparing supper.

"Golly, Massa Capt'n," was his greeting, "dat frigit 'll neber ketch us in dis storm."

"You are 'bout right, Atus," the officer replied, rubbing his hands together in satisfaction; "an' give us two hours more an' we'll be well sheltered from the gale. My little scheme is workin' out 'bout as I thought it would."

In another five minutes he and his young companions had removed their greatcoats and were partaking with keen appetites of the hot

viands the negro placed before them. While they were eating the Captain remarked :

"I don't s'pose you youngsters liked the idee of runnin' 'way from the redcoat ? Ye'd rather have fit him. That's your style."

"I don't see what else we could do," the lad who had been been called Sam by his comrade replied, as soon as he swallowed the food he was masticating. "There are only seven of us, counting Tom and myself, while there are probably two hundred or more on the Britisher."

"And we have but two muskets," put in the other youth, glancing up at the flint-locks fastened to the rear wall of the cabin ; "not much show against their twenty-four cannon, to say nothing about scores and scores of small arms. No, as Sam says, Captain, it was the only thing to do. But I wish we knew the name of the frigate."

"Why ?" questioned his comrade in some surprise.

"So we would recognize her if we ever ran in with her again," Tom responded. "The time might come when we could chase her."

"Prob'bly she's one of the fleet which destroyed Falmouth last October,"* Captain Lewis suggested. "Some of those craft have been cruisin' 'long the coast ever since."

"But why should she want to capture the *Polly*?" the lad persisted. "It looks to me as though we were pretty small game for so large a vessel."

"P'rhaps the Capt'n knows that you an' Sam are on board, an' wants to keep ye from jinin' the Continental Navy," chuckled the stalwart skipper, with a wink at Atus, who immediately grinned from ear to ear.

The boys smiled, and Sam said:

"More likely he knows the *Polly* is commanded by Captain Jeremiah Lewis, who helped to capture the *Margaretta* last June,† and wants to pay up old scores."

* On October, 17th, 1775, the town of Falmouth, now Portland, Me., was destroyed by a British fleet under Captain Mowatt.

† The British sloop *Margaretta* was captured on Monday, June 12th, 1775, in Machias bay by the sloop *Unity* manned by Capt. Jeremiah Lewis and about forty citizens of Machias. It was the first naval victory of the Revolution.

"How modest some folks be to leave out Tom Foster and Sam Lyman!" retorted the officer in mock admiration; then he continued seriously:

"Never mind, lads, what the motive of the redcoat was in chasin' us. 'Twas a good deed that was done that day, if I do say it, an' it won ye your commissions as midshipmen. I'm hopin' after ye jine yer vessel at Philadelfy, 'twill be as Tom wishes; that ye'll run in with this here same blasted frigate, an' capture her."

"For that reason I'd like to know her name," Master Foster declared again, not knowing how soon his desire was to be granted.

When Captain Lewis got ready to return to the deck the boys offered to accompany him, saying:

"We'll take the places of the men, and then they can come down with the mate for their supper."

"I wouldn't accept that offer from every passenger," the skipper replied, "but I'd as lief have you forward as the men, an' I guess they'll be glad 'nough to get somethin' hot to eat an' drink. So tumble into your wraps an' come on."

The lads obeyed, and were soon picking their way down the heaving deck of the *Polly* to her bow. She was still under reefed sail, yet tore along like a race-horse, as though trying to outrun the flurries of snow which were chasing her up. Mast, sail, jib, gunwales, deck, were already covered with a white blanket several inches thick. The clouds above, the whirling flakes below, shut off what little light the stars might have given, and a darkness as heavy as a pall shrouded the sloop and sea.

Huddled close together, under such shelter as the reefed jib gave, the two lads kept their eyes and ears open for any sight or sound which should indicate they were approaching Monhegan. Only their confidence in the man who held the helm, and whom they knew was as familiar with every part of the coast as they were with the streets of Machias, freed them from apprehension. As it was, Sam, during a brief lull of the wind said to his comrade:

"You don't suppose we'll miss the island, and——"

"Run straight on to Portsmouth before morning," broke in Tom with a little laugh. Then he went on with his answer:

"I should, were any one else but Captain Lewis in command; but, as you know, he has time and time again taken the sloop through gales that have sunk many a larger ship. No, I expect in a half-hour to hear the breakers thundering on the east cliffs of the island. Unless I'm mistaken we are running for them as straight as an arrow towards its mark. The Captain is going to put the *Polly* into her haven to-night more by sound than sight."

His surmise proved to be a correct one. In about the time he had specified his quick ear heard a low, dull booming ahead, and he went aft to report it.

"Breakers ahead," he announced as he reached the Captain.

"Where away?" questioned the skipper.

"A little to the north of the starboard bow," was the answer.

"Good!" Captain Lewis ejaculated; "it's as I expected. Go back an' wait till ye hear a low

moan followin' the louder sounds, then report again."

In fifteen minutes the lad was back, declaring:

"I hear the moan after each louder peal."

Instantly the stalwart skipper put the bow of the vessel to the south, then he said:

"Let me know when the moaning has stopped, an' ye hear only the sound of the breakers on the cliffs off the starboard quarter."

In a few minutes Sam came back with the announcement that they had reached such a place.

Captain Lewis without a word took a course due west, while the lad, uncertain as to what might now be expected of him, waited where he was. Shortly the wind lessened quite perceptibly in its force, the waves decreased in size, and even the snow flurries lifted greatly, and seemed to be sweeping along overhead.

"We are behind the island," the Captain declared confidently; "go an' call the mate an' men. I shall need them now. When they

come on deck, Tom an' you may go, an' I thank ye for the good work ye have done."

Sam obeyed the command, and then joined his comrade forward, where they, though off duty, remained to watch the bringing of the *Polly* into her harbor.

Captain Lewis set about the task in a way which suggested he had already formed his plan for carrying it out notwithstanding the wind and storm and darkness. Putting the helm into the hands of the mate, and stationing one of the sailors near the cabin, and the other in front of the mast, he himself went forward to the bowsprit. There he dropped down upon his hands and knees, and with his chin on the railing, peered off into the surrounding gloom.

"Port! Starboard! Straight ahead!" he called out from time to time, and his commands were taken up by the nearest man and repeated to the one behind him, and so passed along to the mate, who promptly put the sloop in the direction named.

Slowly the little craft forged ahead, and with every minute the sea grew less boisterous, and

the wind less rude. Once or twice the watching boys bent down and tried to look through the dark mantle that enveloped them, but they could not distinguish between the land and water. Yet the grizzly Captain never once hesitated in his orders, or in any way seemed perplexed about his course. Steadily came his commands, until the furled jib and sail swung idly in their places, so slight was the breeze that beat upon them. Then with the stentorian call:

"Forward, men! Let go the anchor!" the crouching officer sprang to his feet, and with his own hands assisted the sailors in loosening the cable and dropping the iron overboard.

"Here we are, lads," he said to his passengers a moment later, "safe from the wind and sea, an' hid away from the Britisher. The snow may cover us, but it can't sink us. We may as well go below an' turn in," and with a final order to his men to make everything snug for the night, he led the way down into the cabin.

Quickly removing their outer garments, and

hanging them near the fire to dry, the boys tumbled into their berths, and were soon asleep.

It was light when Tom awoke. Glancing about him he saw Atus was already astir getting breakfast; and, by the sounds which reached his ears from the deck, he concluded that the Captain and his crew were up there clearing it of its covering of snow. Leaping from his bunk, therefore, he crossed over to the one occupied by his comrade, and shook him.

"Wake up, Sam!" he called. "Let us go up and help Captain Lewis and his men dig out the sloop."

"All right," Sam answered good-naturedly; and in a few moments they were ready to leave the cabin.

As they reached the deck the first thing they noticed was that the storm was already over, the sky was clearing, and apparently a good day, though keen and cold, was before them. Then they noted the shape and size of the little haven in which the *Polly* had taken refuge. Staring about him Sam exclaimed:

"Why, there are two islands here, instead of one!"

"Yes, and this bay is no bay at all, but a strait between them," Tom responded.

"That's 'bout it, lads," Captain Lewis declared, approaching his passengers at this moment, and greeting them with a hearty good morning. "The main island is here on our right, while that other on the port side is but a huge heap of rocks, as ye'd see if it wasn't covered with snow. Then just ahead of us is the narrow channel which cuts it off from the bigger one. No one would 'spect it, though, who hasn't been in here, for down thar at its entrance the passage seems to be only a small bay."

"I wonder if there's water enough for the sloop to go out that way," Tom remarked, and nodding his head towards the narrow strait in front of them.

"I should try it, if I had to," the Captain replied, "though I should want a flood-tide under the *Polly's* keel. A bigger craft wouldn't stand much chance."

"And it will be flood-tide in an hour," the lad continued.

"Yes," the skipper admitted; "but what of that?"

"Oh! I was only thinking if the frigate discovered our hiding-place we could escape that way," the boy answered.

"So we could," the officer responded, "but it isn't likely we shall need to. Arter breakfast I'm goin' to climb up to the top of those rocks an' take an observation. If the frigate isn't round, an' I don't believe she is, we'll go out as we came in, an' scud 'way towards Salem at the *Polly's* best gait."

"Let us help you clear away the snow, Captain," Sam now said, remembering why Tom and he had come on deck.

"It's 'bout done," Captain Lewis replied. "Thar wasn't as much of it as I calkilated on. Couldn't have snowed much arter midnight. You can help break out the riggin', though, if ye want to."

"Aye, aye, sir," the boys responded, and hastening to assist the men in this work.

In a half-hour both ropes and sails had been freed from their coating of snow and ice, and were in good working order. The deck and railing had previously been cleared of their white mantle, so the sloop now bore little trace of the storm through which she had passed.

"I guess we'll call it quits," the Captain remarked, as Atus poked his woolly head out of the cabin door, and bawled: "Breakfast!"

Then he added:

"Seein' how everythin' is so snug-like, we may as well all go down an' eat together. I reckon this keen air has made ye all hungry."

No one needed a second invitation, and shortly they were seated at the cabin table doing full justice to the meal the negro had prepared.

Ten minutes passed, then so suddenly as to cause every inmate of the cabin to leap to his feet in alarm, there came the boom of a cannon close at hand, followed by a whirring, whizzing shriek above the deck of the sloop, and an immediate crash among the trees on the adjacent shore.

Pushing and crowding one another up the

companionway both men and boys reached the deck to find the British frigate hove to off the tiny harbor, and preparing to send in a yawl to capture them.

CHAPTER II.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

THE sight of the British vessel in such close proximity filled every observer but the stalwart Captain with alarm. He merely ejaculated:

"So she's found us arter all," and then proceeded to fill and light his pipe as coolly as though to have an English frigate following him up was the most commonplace thing in the world.

"Haven't we time to slip away through the north passage, Captain Lewis?" Tom asked, greatly perplexed by the skipper's unconcern.

"Lots of it," the officer admitted, and watching steadily every movement of the enemy. "But the longer we wait, the better 'twill be for us."

"How do you make that out?" questioned Sam in surprise, while the mate and two sailors

looked at their commander as though they doubted his sanity.

The yawl, loaded with marines, was already leaving the side of the man-of-war, and nodding towards it, Captain Lewis said:

"The nearer that boat gets to us 'fore we give 'em the slip, the longer it'll take for it to go back to the frigate, an' she's got to wait till it returns 'fore she can chase us up. She dassent come up through here, an' by the time she picks up the yawl, an' goes out 'round the west isle, we shall be purty nigh half-way over to Pemaquid Point."

Here he waited a minute for his hearers to take in the full force of his declaration; then he went on:

"Our sails are already up, dryin' in the sun as we left 'em when we went down to breakfast. 'Twon't take a half-minute to cut our cable, which I'm goin' to do, an' pick up the anchor on my voyage back to Machias. So ye see it's 'bout as I say, we've lots of time to get through the passage."

As though to give additional weight to his

words he now sat down on the stern rail, and puffed away at his pipe with a nonchalance which was clearly assumed, for a keen observer would have noticed that he was taking in the direction of the wind, the condition of the tide, the distance through the narrow channel, and the progress the on-coming boat was making.

Five minutes passed. The yawl was now not over a musket-shot away. Suddenly Captain Lewis became transformed into a man of action. Leaping quickly from the rail he knocked the ashes from his pipe, and put it into his pocket. Then his commands rang out in low, but decisive tones:

"Send a man forward to cut the cable, Mr. Brown. Then stand ready to tauten the sails," and he walked briskly over to the tiller, grasping it with a firm hand.

So speedily were his orders obeyed, it seemed but an instant before the little sloop was gliding across to the west side of the harbor, at this point not over fifty yards wide. Once close under the shore of the rocky islet, the sturdy helmsman brought her about, and with the sails

fairly well filled by the morning breeze, darted straight into the narrow channel separating the two islands.

This movement seemed to puzzle the occupants of the approaching yawl, for the rowers, at the command of their officer, rested for a moment on their oars, while all gazed curiously at the *Polly*. Then, apparently coming to the conclusion that the Yankees were going to beach their craft, and take to the woods, the pursuers gave a great yell, and came on again with a tremendous spurt, hoping to overtake them before they could carry out their purpose.

Not until they were at the beginning of the narrow passage, and the escaping sloop was well out upon the ocean itself, did they discover how they had been outwitted. Then, sending a volley of musket balls after the fleeing vessel—a volley that fell wide of its mark—they whirled about and dashed back towards the waiting frigate. They must have made good time on their return, and the man-of-war a quick passage about the southwest end of Monhegan, for

the *Polly* was not over two miles ahead when she was again sighted, but she still held this vantage when two hours later she rounded Pemaquid Point, and headed into John's Bay.

That Captain Lewis still had a definite plan of procedure in his mind was clearly indicated the moment the rocky point shut the frigate from his view. Concealed by the high cliffs he took a course across the broad bay to its opposite shore, and, running between the outlying reefs and Heron Island, entered the mouth of the Damariscotta River. Here he put the helm into the hands of the mate, and went over to where his two passengers were standing in the lee of the cabin.

"So far, so good, lads," he commented, "an' the frigate hasn't caught us yet. Maybe we could keep out of her reach by dodgin' 'mong these islands. But I have another plan to throw her off our track, if ye'll give me your help."

"You may count on us to assist you in any way we can," they responded together.

"Well, ye may not know it, but this point

on our left that seems to be a part of the main shore is really an island. Some miles up the river thar is a narrow passage back into John's Bay. So runnin' up the river I can get out either way, this side or t'other side of Thumb Cap Point. My scheme is to go up the river with the *Polly* where the frigate can't follow her, an' there I'll stay till nightfall. Then, findin' out which passage the Britisher is guardin', I'll slip out by the other, an' 'fore mornin' be well down toward Salem."

"Yes, but how are you going to know which passage the frigate is guarding?" Tom asked.

"That's where I want your an' Sam's help," explained the officer. "I want you two lads to take our skiff, an' go ashore on Rutherford's Island an' keep watch over the frigate. 'Fore night you'll know whether she has given up the chase, or is still hangin' round here. If hereabouts you can locate her, an' then come up the river arter us with your information. You'll find us in the second cove 'bove here on your right. I'll have a light put over the side of the sloop so ye can't miss us. What say ye?"

"We are ready," was the prompt response.

It took but a few minutes to provision the small boat for the day's sojourn on the adjacent point, and then the boys rowed themselves into the small cove opposite which the *Polly* now was, while she kept on up the river.

Landing on a pebbly beach, surrounded by a heavy pine forest, the first act of the lads was to conceal their boat; then they clambered up the hill, and crossed over to the east shore of the narrow point. On a rocky bluff, jutting well out into John's Bay, they decided to take their first observation, and were scarcely in a position to overlook the sea, when they experienced two surprises.

The first was to find the British vessel close in shore. Evidently she had, on turning Pemaquid Point, started up the inlet into which she believed her prey had gone. Then becoming convinced of the second ruse played upon her by the fleeing craft, she had crossed over to the west shore in pursuit of her. Running too close to the cliffs, however, she had lost the wind, and was now getting out a boat to tow her out.

where the northwest breeze rippled the surface of the water. Her nearness to them permitted the watchers to read her name.

"*The Glasgow*," Tom announced. "Good! we shall know her when we meet her again."

But Sam had made a more surprising discovery.

"Look!" he exclaimed in a suppressed whisper, and clutching his comrade's arm. "If there isn't the old Tory, Ichabod Jones,* standing on the quarter-deck with her captain."

"Sure enough!" Tom ejaculated in a low voice. Then he continued: "That explains the persistency of the frigate in following us up. Master Jones wants to get his vessel again."

"Yes, and it also explains how we came to be found at Monhegan, and why we are so quickly followed over here," added Sam. "Master Jones knows these waters as well as Captain Lewis."

"And for that reason the Captain's plan for throwing off the frigate to-night may not work,"

* He belonged in Machias, and his two sloops, the *Unity* and the *Polly*, had been confiscated by the town committee because of his Toryism.

Tom commented. "But all we can do is to watch and wait."

While the lads were talking, the work of lowering the yawl had been completed, and a stout cable stretched between the crafts. Now under the sturdy pull of the oarsmen the man-of-war began to forge ahead. Her course carried her near a rocky islet, a few rods off from the main shore. As she came abreast of this there was the sudden report of a musket, and a bullet cut the towing rope close to the frigate's bow as neatly as if it had been severed with a knife, while a light puff of smoke from the center of the adjacent heap of rocks told the location of the perpetrator of the deed.

Excited by the mysterious shot, and forgetful of their own safety, the boys sprang to their feet, and gazed wonderingly first at the islet, and then at the vessel, which under the force of the tide was fast drifting towards the dangerous reef. There was a vast difference in the two objects of their vision. The isle was as still as death; while the vessel was all commotion.

For the British captain, springing quickly

into the starboard quarter, had issued two commands in a voice which made them distinctly audible to the listening lads.

"Put out another cable! Clear away the gun!"

Rapidly a new rope was payed out to the towing boat, which had backed up under the bow of the vessel to receive it, then a broadside was fired at the innocent looking pile of stones a few fathoms away. Pieces of rock and a cloud of snow and sand flew high in the air above the islet, but not a sound or a movement told whether the solitary gunner there had been injured.

"Do you suppose they killed him?" Sam asked in awed tones.

"I don't see where he could hide to escape that shower of balls," Tom replied thoughtfully; "nor do I understand his reason for attacking the frigate single-handed. It seems foolhardy."

"He certainly has accomplished nothing," Sam declared, "for there they pull the vessel off shore again."

It was true. Already the new cable had been stretched taut, and the *Glasgow* was for the second time slowly moving out towards the rippling waters, now no great distance away. A brief delay in her maneuver seemed to be the only disadvantage she had suffered from the musket shot, and in five minutes she would be where the wind would fill her sails.

Crack! Again the musket report rang out upon the air—this time from the east shore of the isle, and well out of line with the place into which the man-of-war had poured her shots. Again the bullet sped true to its mark, severing the towing hawser as neatly as before. Again, and caught by a more powerful current, the frigate whirled towards the adjacent rocks.

"He's alive! He's alive!" Tom declared, jumping around in his excitement. "He's trying to ground the frigate on the reef! And see! He's done it. There she strikes the sunken ledge. The tide is going out; she will be held fast."

This was what had really happened, and enraged by the catastrophe, the British comman-

der now issued an order for the islet to be showered with grape-shot, doubtless hoping in this way to destroy the man who had so audaciously attacked him. From one end to the other the rocky heap was swept by the galling fire. To the watching lads it did not seem as though any living object, even though no larger than a mouse, could have escaped the rain of bullets.

They were now confident the brave fellow ensconced there must have perished.

At length, his anger appeased, the captain ordered the guns to cease, and began preparations for warping his stranded vessel off the sunken reef, if that were possible. The boat already out was directed to pick up the severed ropes, and then to sound on all sides of the frigate for the shortest route into deep water. This was found to be almost directly off the bow, so the great anchor was carried a hundred yards to the south and thrown overboard. Then the windlass was manned with a dozen stout tars, and the work-of drawing in the cable began.

The slack of the rope came in; the cord be-

came as rigid as steel; the sailors put all their strength on the capstan bars, and yet the vessel did not move.

Fresh men, the heaviest and strongest of the crew, were now put to the task, and with a tremendous jerk they started the frigate a few inches.

"Once more, lads, heave!" shouted the officer in charge of the gang as he felt the ship stir.

They responded with a will and this time the craft moved several feet.

"She's coming! Heave again, my hearties!" cried the subaltern.

But before the sailors could obey, the report of a musket rang out on the islet for the third time, and the next instant the taut rope parted with a suddenness that tumbled the tars into a heap on the deck, and sent the loosened end whizzing and whirling three hundred feet out to sea.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" the two lads exclaimed as loud as they dared, while Tom continued:

"That settles it. Before the frigate can recover her anchor and stretch another cable the

water will be too low for her to get off the ledge until another tide. We may as well go and tell Captain Lewis. He can continue his voyage without fear of being followed for eight or ten hours at least."

"Yes," assented Sam, "but let us wait a moment and see what the redcoats are going to do next."

Tom readily assented, and both boys, gazing off towards the vessel, saw that additional yawls were being lowered. Into these, and the one already launched, there filed a moment later a half hundred marines, heavily armed. Then the commander of the frigate, standing near the rail, gave his last command to the officer in charge of the squad, who was about to descend into the waiting boat.

"Turn over every rock, Mr. Fanning; scour every crevice; and don't return without the culprit hiding there. When you bring him we'll string him up to the nearest yard-arm."

"They are going to search the islet. The man cannot escape now" Sam announced in an excited whisper.

"Yes, and with a force of fifty to one," Tom commented, scornfully. "Brave, aren't they? I declare I wish we had guns, we'd go down there and fight for the brave fellow."

"He's still able to take care of himself. Look there!" cried Sam.

His exclamation was called forth by a fourth shot from the island, and scarcely were the words out of his mouth when Lieutenant Fanning, who was half-way down the side of the frigate, let go his hold on the ropes and fell into the sea.

A step behind the lads at this instant so startled them, they made no comment on the fate of the officer, but turned to see who the intruder was. A sigh of relief escaped them as they caught sight of the familiar face of Captain Lewis, who abruptly asked:

"What's all the firin' for?"

Quickly Tom explained, adding:

"That last shot from the rocks hit the British lieutenant; they are just taking his body out of the water."

"Then ye can make up yer mind that feller

will make good his escape," remarked the Captain. "He knew that shot would delay the Britishers till he could get 'way."

"I don't see anything of him," Sam said, glancing down at the narrow strip of water which separated the islet from the main shore.

"P'rhaps not, but they won't find him," the skipper stoutly asserted, as the boats with a new officer in command now left the ship's side.

It was but a short pull to the rocks, and they were soon swarming with redcoats. For some minutes the search went on; stones were overturned; holes were explored; and the little shrubbery the cannon balls had not cut down was pulled up by the roots. Then a shout went up.

"They've found him!" exclaimed Tom regretfully.

"No, they ain't," replied the officer; "it's only his boat, that the shot knocked to pieces," —a statement which was verified a minute later when the searchers began to toss the bits of wood back and forth between them.

"How has he escaped, then?" asked Sam.

"By takin' to the water," explained the Captain.

"What, in this cold weather?" the boy questioned, incredulously.

"It's better than bein' took by the Britishers," commented the skipper drily.

"A case where a cold reception was preferable to a warm one," suggested Tom, facetiously.

"Come 'long, an' I'll prove to ye that he's escaped," said Captain Lewis suddenly, as he walked off down the point.

Reaching a place in direct line with the rocky islet he stopped, and waited for the lads to join him.

"What 'd I tell ye?" he exclaimed, pointing to some foot-tracks in the snow, and which led from the east shore towards the west side of the island.

"Do ye see those other spots followin' 'long on both sides of the boot marks?" he continued. "They were made by the drippin's from his clothes. It's as I told ye, he took to the water.

We'll find him somewhere down this way," and he started along the trail.

As they went on Tom remembered that the sudden appearance of Captain Lewis had not been accounted for, and so inquired:

"How came you down here, Captain?"

"I heerd the guns 'fore I got up to the cove where I was goin', an' wonderin' what was up I came back to the bay where ye landed. I had no boat, but found a place where the water was deep 'nough for the *Polly* to run close in to the rocks, an' by gettin' out on the bowsprit I leaped ashore. Then I took your track, an' came over where ye was."

"The *Polly* is in the little bay waiting for us, then?" Sam queried.

"Yes, I told the mate to hold on, as we all might want to board the sloop at short notice."

"We can take this man over there, then, and give him dry clothing," suggested the kind-hearted boy.

"If he needs it, sartinly," assented the officer.

The trail now led them down a sharp decline

to the head of a cove, so small and so shut in with the forest, it would easily have escaped the notice of one unfamiliar with the locality, and here, anchored a few rods off shore, was a small shallop.

The footsteps led straight down to the water's edge, and it was evident the man they were following had waded out to the boat.

"Shallop ahoy!" shouted Captain Lewis in loud tones when he and his companions had reached the beach.

For answer a head was first thrust out of the tiny cabin, and then half of the form of a partially dressed man appeared.

"Hello on shore!" he answered; and then he inquired: "Are you the captain of the sloop which an hour or two ago ran into the river?"

"Yes," responded Captain Lewis, "an' we want to thank ye for strandin' that frigate, an' ask ye if we can help ye in any way?"

"Perhaps so," the stranger returned. "Where's your sloop? And where are you going?"

"Round in the next bay, an' we are bound from Machias to Salem," was the double answer.

"Oh! ho! glad to make your acquaintance, Captain Lewis," was the immediate response; "and yours, too, Master Foster and Master Lyman. I'd ask you all to come on board, but I don't suppose you care to wade out here as I did. Never mind, as soon as I'm dressed I'll run the shallop over against that ledge on your left, and you can get in here with me, and go around to your own sloop."

With these words he disappeared into his cabin, and wondering who the fellow was, and how he knew them, the trio went slowly along to the place he had suggested as most suitable for boarding his craft.

CHAPTER III.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

In a short time the occupant of the shallop reappeared, this time fully dressed, and, with the skill of one who was in every way familiar with the handling of boats, got the tiny craft under sail, and came over where Captain Lewis and the two lads were waiting for him.

As he came near they saw that he was a young man, perhaps twenty-eight or thirty years old, of splendid proportions, and with a countenance which inspired confidence, and suggested resoluteness and courage. Without the incidents of the morning they would have been forced to admit he could meet danger, or carry out a daring enterprise, without flinching. His face showed it.

Not until he had taken them on board, and

started out of the little cove, did he tell them who he was. Then he began his explanation by saying:

"I presume, Captain, you are wondering who I am, and how I came to know you and these lads?"

"I confess I'm a leetle curious 'long that line," the officer admitted.

"I am Nathaniel Fanning of Damiscove Island," was the announcement.

"What! not the son of my old shipmate, Thomas Fanning?" exclaimed Captain Lewis quickly.

"Yes," the younger man replied with a smile, "and as soon as you said you were bound from Machias to Salem I knew who you were, for I've heard my father speak of you many times. As for these lads," he continued, turning towards Tom and Sam, "I suspected who they were, since I have a letter from Master John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, which mentions them, and that they would, about December first, start for Philadelphia to enter the new navy. In fact, as I am also to

have a berth in the same fleet, he advises me to make the journey to that city in their company."

"I wish you might be assigned to the same ship," interrupted Tom impulsively. Then as though to explain his wish he went on:

"Sam and I were on the bluff above the rocky islet where you were hid. We saw the whole of your single-handed fight with the *Glasgow*, and wondered why you were not killed."

"It wasn't their fault," responded Master Fanning laughingly.

"Tell us all about it," put in Sam eagerly. "How you came to be there, and what made you think of stranding the frigate, and how you escaped? And that makes me think—wasn't that officer you shot named Fanning, too, the same as yourself? That was funny, wasn't it?"

"He was my cousin," the owner of the shallop announced with some show of bitterness. "I was there to shoot him—all else that occurred was but incidental. You will not understand,

however, without hearing the whole story, so I may as well tell it to you."

He was silent a moment as though deciding where to begin. Then he said :

"The British fleet which destroyed Falmouth last October raided our island, as you may know, carrying off cattle and sheep and hogs in large numbers. The most of that devastation was on the west side, however, so my father's place, which is near the east coast, escaped. But a few days ago the *Glasgow* appeared right opposite our farm, and Lieutenant Fanning, my cousin, was sent on shore with a squad of marines, to destroy or carry off our property. He had been on the estate many a time in former years, and knew how and where to find everything of value. Making use of this knowledge he not only stripped us of what he could carry off, but put everything else into the buildings, and then burned them to the ground.

"I was away at the time, having gone over to the main shore in the shallop. On my return the following afternoon I found my aged parents dependent on others for shelter, for raiment,

and for food. I made such arrangements as I could for their temporal welfare during the remaining winter months, and then set out along the coast in this boat searching for the frigate with the avowed purpose of taking my cousin's life.

"I got as far as Matinio Island when the head winds and threatening storm compelled me to put back. I made Pemaquid Point before dark, and under its lee found a haven for the night. Early this morning I discovered your sloop coming over from Monhegan, and after watching you awhile saw that the frigate was giving you chase.

"I knew what course I should take if in your place, and concluded the *Glasgow* would be enticed in close to Thumb Cap Point. Hoping to get a shot at my cousin, if he was on the deck of the vessel, I came over here, anchored my shallop in the little bay, and went around to the rocky islet in my skiff.

"I was hidden there when you went by, but the frigate was my game, and so I quietly waited. She soon came in sight around the opposite

point, and at first started up John's Bay, making me think I was going to miss the very opportunity I had sought by having crossed over where I was. But soon she changed her course, and ran directly over to the island. When she lost her steering way, by getting under the lee of the cliffs, I saw I could strand her, and laid my plans to do so. The rest you know."

"But how did you escape the balls they showered on the islet?" persisted Sam.

"In the first instance," Master Fanning answered, "by changing my position the moment I had fired. I got out of their range, and though covered with snow and sand suffered no harm. The second time I crawled back to the land side of the islet, and crept under a huge rock which so completely sheltered me I was not harmed, though the grape-shot fell thick and fast all around me. My skiff, however, was broken into a dozen pieces by the balls."

"And you had to take to the water," suggested Tom.

"There was nothing else to do," the young

man declared; "so after firing the last time I, shielded by a boulder, dropped into the water unseen, and swam across to the adjacent shore. There the forest concealed me, and I hastened over here to put on dry clothing as soon as possible. Fortunately I had a good supply with me."

"I wonder if they are still searching for you?" Sam here remarked. "You know the British captain told his men not to return without you."

"If they obey that command I reckon 'twill be some time 'fore they leave John's Bay," Captain Lewis declared drily.

They were now entering the bay where the *Polly* was waiting for them, and were soon alongside of her. It took but a few minutes to acquaint the mate and men with the incidents of the last two hours, then the yawl the lads had left on the beach was recovered, after which the anchor of the sloop was weighed, and, with the shallop in tow, a course was taken for Damiscove Island.

"I s'pose you want to stop thar," Captain

Lewis remarked to young Fanning after he had issued his order.

"If you are willing, sir," he responded. "I wish to see my father and mother again, then I'll go on to Salem with you. I need not delay you over an hour."

"Since we should have been delayed ten times that but for your mornin's work, Nathaniel, I guess we'll wait that long for ye," the skipper answered. "I don't mind seein' yer pa agin either. Mus' now be nigh on to ten years since I met him."

So a short stop was made at the temporary home of Master Fanning's parents, where the shallop was left; and then the *Polly*, with the young man added to her list of passengers, began a voyage to Salem which was completed the following day.

Before the vessel reached her destination the three travelers had agreed upon the next stage of their journey. Nathaniel Fanning had an older brother in the army besieging Boston.

"I want to visit him," he said, "and you, lads, better go along with me. It will give you an

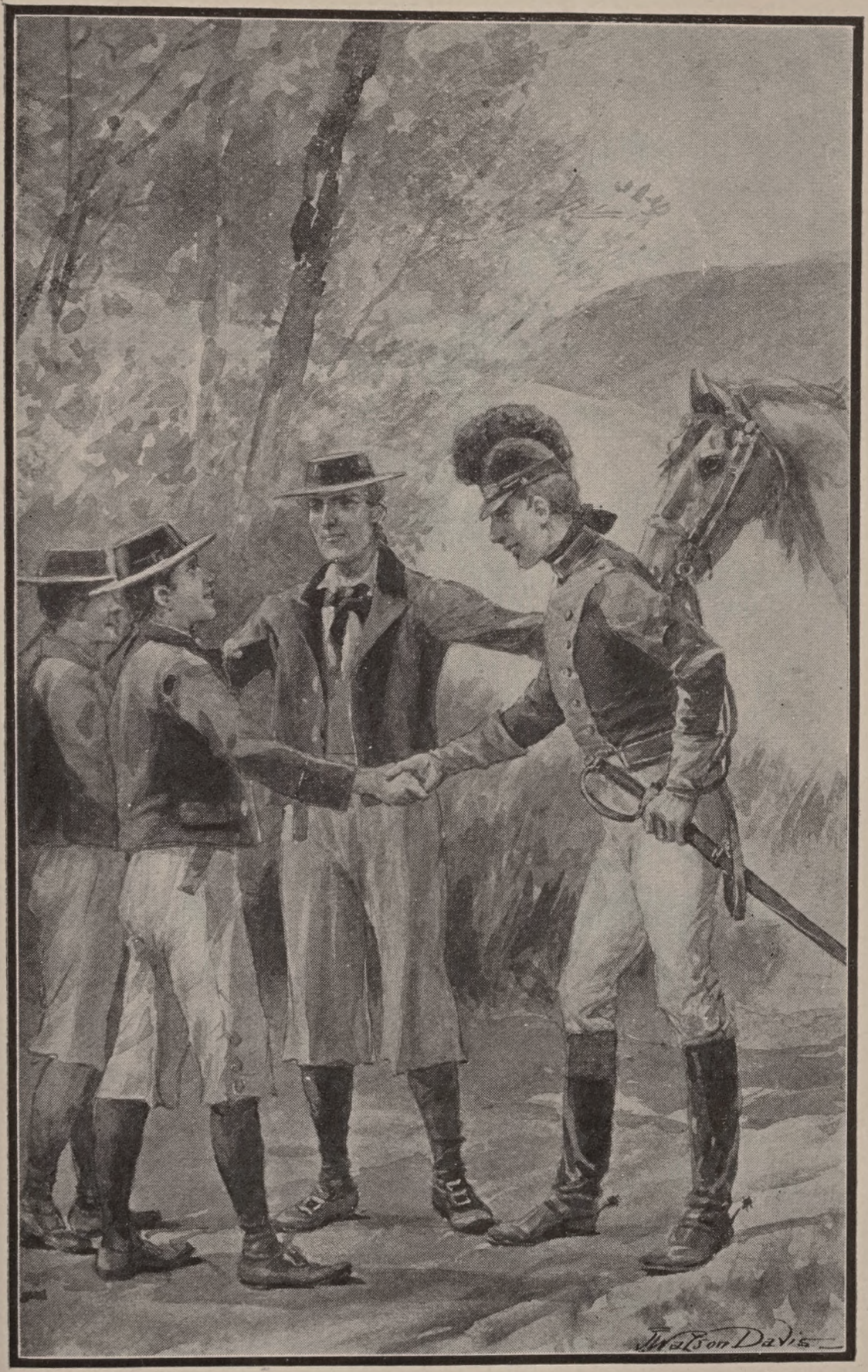
opportunity to see our brave men who are holding the British in the town, like rats in a hole, and we shall fight the better on the water by knowing what our land forces are doing."

"We shall be glad to go," the boys had responded, "for it is not much out of our way. The stage route through Providence and New London to New York is the one we had thought of taking."

So it was settled, and early on the morning after the arrival of the sloop in port, the trio, with their baggage strapped to their backs, set out for Cambridge.

It was a beautiful day for winter; the walking was good, for the snow-storm of three days before had not reached as far south as they now were; the air was also clear and crisp, sending the rich blood pulsating through their veins with life and vigor; so they walked briskly along, reaching Medford about noon.

In a sheltered nook, beside the Mystic River, they paused to eat the luncheon they had brought with them; and then, crossing the stream, they took a road that led toward a



"Lads, this is my brother, Captain Fanning," said Nathaniel, introducing the boys. Page 55. *Two Yankee Middies.*

high hill on whose top they could see a redoubt. Before they reached the elevation, however, there was a clatter of hoofs behind them, and in another moment they were overtaken by a body of horsemen.

The leader, a stalwart fellow of perhaps thirty-five years, gave the travelers a quick glance, then, crying halt to his followers, he pulled up his own steed. Immediately leaping to the ground, he rushed towards young Fanning, exclaiming:

"Nathaniel! My brother Nathaniel, if I'm alive!"

"John! brother John!" cried the other, and then they were locked in each other's arms.

After a hearty embrace the older man released the younger, asking:

"How came you here, Nathaniel?"

"It's quite a story," replied his relative, "and better wait until we are in camp. Let me introduce my companions. This is Tom Foster, and this is Sam Lyman, both of Machias. Lads, this is my brother, Captain Fanning."

"Glad to meet you," the officer responded,

and offering them his hand in return. Then looking over toward his men who had been silent witnesses of the interview, he inquired:

"Are three of you willing to surrender your horses for the use of these travelers, while you return to your quarters on foot?"

Every man instantly dismounted, and proffered the use of his beast. With a flush of pride mantling his cheeks at the readiness of his troopers to obey his slightest wish, Captain Fanning said:

"Sorry I can't accommodate every one of you, my good fellows, but as that is impossible, I'll accept the offer of the three animals nearest my own."

Turning to his brother and friends, he added:

"Mount, please, and we'll hurry along to my quarters, where you can rest after your long tramp."

He now walked over to his own horse, and lifted his hand. Every trooper, except the three who were to loan their steeds, leaped back into the saddle. He then followed their example, and, noting that Nathaniel and his com-

panions were already mounted, he led the cavalcade up the adjacent summit which he told his guests was called Winter Hill.

On its top he again halted, and, directing their attention to the broad outlook before them, he remarked:

"Let me point out to you the situation of our troops. Directly in front of us is the left wing of our army, under General Lee. You notice the redoubts between us and Prospect Hill yonder. Beyond is Fort Number Three, and still farther away the redoubt on Willis Creek. Down there a little to our left, and on what is known as Charleston Neck, are Bunker and Breed Hills, where we had our great fight last June. I tell you that was a battle, and though we had to retreat in the end because we were out of powder and shot, we were not whipped.

"Off to the southwest is Cambridge, with General Washington's headquarters just this side of the village. My own station is near there, as my regiment belongs to the main force. A little east of Cambridge, near Charles River, are Forts Number One and Two. Farther east are

two gun batteries. Over there in Roxbury is our right wing under General Ward. You may notice that we have redoubts and batteries clear around to Dorchester Neck. The besieging line is unbroken, and no force of any size can get through. I won't say no man can get through, for we have reason to believe that a spy named Barnard has been going back and forth for some time. I was sent out with my men to follow up a clue our commander thought he had of him, but it proved to be a wild-goose chase. The fellow hasn't been seen in that locality for months."

As he ceased speaking he started up his horse, and, descending the hill, the little party after a smart canter of ten minutes arrived at the building where Captain Fanning, in connection with the other officers of his regiment, had his quarters. Here they dismounted, and the Captain took his guests up to a large chamber on the second floor of the house, where they removed the luggage they were carrying, and washed off the dust and dirt which had accumulated during their long tramp and shorter ride.

Then the Captain insisted on their partaking of a second dinner, which he ordered served in his own room, and after that Nathaniel related the main incidents connected with his journey from his island home, and the purpose he had in view.

"I might have known you would enlist in the navy," his brother said when he had finished. "You have loved the sea ever since you were big enough to toddle down to its shore. But there will be just as good a chance for you to strike a heavy blow for our beloved cause on the ocean as on the land. May we hear brave things of you and these lads who are to accompany you. We'll now take a look around the camp."

For the rest of the afternoon, therefore, they strolled among the fortifications and barracks, getting some idea of how the brave soldiers were living, and of the duties they had to perform. Once they had a glimpse of the Commander-in-chief himself, as he, attended by some of his staff, returned to his headquarters from a ride among the redoubts.

The boys were especially delighted with the sight, brief though it was, of the general whose name and fame were soon to be known the world over, and who was to be loved as few men have been loved by a grateful people.

"To see him was worth our tramp from Salem here," Tom declared, gazing after the officer until he had disappeared into the house where he had his quarters.

"Yes," assented Sam, "we shall be proud of the fact whenever we hear of his driving out the redcoats." But neither lad had any idea then that they, before they left the camp, should have the privilege of meeting and conversing with General Washington.

For an hour longer they continued their inspection, and then returned to the house for supper, which they ate in the mess hall with all the officers who were quartered in the same building as Captain Fanning. After it was eaten that gentleman said to the lads :

"There are so many of us in this house, I shall have to ask you to accept of a lodging room in another building."

"Oh! don't put yourself out for us, sir," they answered; "we can stow in anywhere."

"I shall not ask you to go far," the Captain continued. "Nathaniel can of course share my room, and I have found a place for you at Jerry Brown's, a quarter of a mile down the road. He's a sort of huckster and sutler combined, and sometimes takes in lodgers. You are to have a room down there, but will come up here to breakfast with us."

So after tattoo they went down to Master Brown's—a large, square, two-story dwelling, standing back a little ways from the highway. The owner came to the door when they knocked, and, upon their telling him that Captain Fanning had sent them down there for the night, he nodded as though the whole matter was understood, and then showed them to a corner room on the second floor, where he told them they were to sleep.

Before he retired Tom for some unaccountable reason made an examination of the chamber. He noted that it was in the southwest corner of the building; that there was a window

on both the south and west sides; that at the east end was the door into the hallway; and that on the north there was a second door, tightly closed.

Going over to this the boy tried the latch; it raised, and the door readily opened, revealing a long, narrow closet, whose farther partition was of boards instead of plaster. There was a row of nails driven into the boarding, evidently to hang clothing upon, and there the boys hung their own garments when they had removed them, leaving the door of the wardrobe wide open.

Tired from the long walk of the day they, after getting into bed, quickly fell asleep, and slept for some time. Then Tom awoke with a start. He was sure some one had knocked on his door. Nor was he mistaken. Again there came three low taps, like a prearranged signal. He was about to ask who was there, when he heard a low voice, apparently at the foot of the stairs, saying:

"Hush! not that door, but the next one down the corridor."

"Oh!" was the guarded reply of the person without, and then he could be heard moving cautiously along the hall.

His tap at the door of the north chamber was distinctly audible to the listening boy. A moment later some one in the room answered, though what he said was in too low a tone for Tom to understand. Then a flicker of light shone through a small crevice in the broad partition of the closet.

For a minute the lad watched that ray of light, an irresistible feeling coming over him that he ought to investigate its source. The conviction deepened, and leaping softly to the floor, he tiptoed into the wardrobe. He now saw that the light came through a split in one of the boards into which a nail had been driven. Putting his eye close up to the tiny crack, he discovered there was another closet on the other side the counterpart of his own, the door of which was also ajar.

This gave him a view into the other chamber. On a table, near the center of the room, a candle was burning. Beyond the table was the

bed, near which a small, slender, almost boyish looking man was hastily dressing. When his boots, trousers, and waistcoat were on, he went over to the door, and let his caller in.

At first the newcomer was out of the line of vision of the watching boy, and, but for what he now heard, Tom would probably have gone back to bed, and allowed the men to hold their interview unobserved by himself. But the visitor on entering the room exclaimed:

"I am here at last, Barnard."

While Barnard replied:

"I'm glad of it, Major Jordan. Have you the papers?"

"Yes," acknowledged the other.

Now Barnard was the name of the spy Captain Fanning had been searching for; and Major Jordan was the name of one of the officers with whom Tom had eaten supper. It might, therefore, be worth while to wait and see what the men had to do with each other.

All this flashed through the boy's brain instantly, and he remained there with his eye glued to the crevice.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BREAKING OF THE PENNANT.

In a moment the two men came slowly along to th table, and Tom was able to see them distinctly. He recognized Major Jordan, and in another instant was equally sure that his companion was indeed the noted spy. For the officer, taking a bundle of papers from the inside pocket of his coat, and laying them down on the table, remarked:

"Fanning was out looking for you this morning, Barnard."

"I know it. Jerry told me. Well, he didn't find me, did he? Ought to have looked nearer home," and there was a low chuckle of delight.

"No," assented the other; "but after I have explained these drawings to you, you better start for the town. Something might happen to give away your hiding-place, and I don't want you to be found with the papers in your hands."

"It might be bad for both of us," admitted Barnard, "and I'll be off before morning. Go ahead with your explanations."

Tom did not wait to hear any more. He had already formed a plan for capturing the plotters, and knew it must be carried out promptly to be a success. Stepping back into the room, he awoke Sam.

"Hush!" he said in a whisper, "I've something to tell you," and then he quickly told his comrade what he had discovered. Then he added:

"Dress yourself, and keep watch over the men in there, while I go for help."

Two minutes later he was dressed, and softly opening the window on the south side of the house, because that was farthest away from the conspirators, he looked out. The way seemed clear. The distance to the ground was not over ten feet, and he decided to make the leap.

Before he could do so, however, Sam was at his side with the sheets of the bed knotted together.

"I'll let you down," he said in a low tone. "It will be surer, and you'll make less noise."

Tom nodded, and grasped one end of the improvised rope; then he swung himself clear of the window, and was silently lowered to the ground. The next minute he disappeared in the darkness.

But he had no trouble in finding his way to the house where Captain Fanning was quartered. In five minutes he was there, to find, however, a guard at the door. He had not thought of this, and was at first puzzled how to get by the sentinel. When, however, the man asked him who he was and what he wanted, he recognized him as one of the three troopers who had given up their horses earlier in the day.

"I am the lad who rode your horse this morning," he explained hastily, "and have come from Jerry Brown's with an important message for Captain Fanning."

The soldier looked him over, and then said:

"So you are, go ahead," and with a sigh of relief Tom darted by him and up the stairway.

To rouse the officer was a little more difficult

task, for both he and his brother were sleeping heavily, but it was finally done, and to him and Nathaniel the boy told of his discovery.

"We have no time to lose," the Captain declared. "Fortunately there are men enough right here to make the capture. I will join you in a minute."

While listening to the boy's tale he had dressed himself, and now, buckling on his sword and pistols, he left the room. He was gone but a moment or two, returning with the Colonel of the regiment, and two orderlies.

"We have decided to keep this movement among ourselves," he explained; "with Nathaniel and the two boys there will be seven of us, surely enough to capture two men."

He and the Colonel now led the way down the stairs, followed in turn by the orderlies, and young Fanning and Tom. Two abreast they walked rapidly down the street, and it was not fifteen minutes from the time the lad had made his discovery when they halted under the window of his chamber. A low whistle brought Sam to the opening, and he again let down the

knotted sheet. Noiselessly Tom ascended, and then he and Sam exerted their strength, first to pull the Captain, and then the Colonel, up to the room. When they were within the house, Nathaniel Fanning by pre-arrangement, went around to the window of the north chamber to keep guard there, while the two orderlies took their stations to watch the outer doors against the escape of Master Brown.

Waiting until each man was in his assigned place the two officers accompanied by the two lads went out into the corridor, and along to the door of Master Barnard's room. Throwing themselves suddenly against it, they burst it open, and sprang into the chamber.

Major Jordan was near the door, apparently about to take his departure, and at the sight of his brother officers meekly surrendered. But the spy, already dressed for his trip through the army lines, leaped to the nearest window, threw it up, and jumped out. He landed on the frozen ground below with a force which caused him to lose his balance and tumble over, and before he could recover his feet, Nathaniel Fan-

ning was upon him and effected his capture. The commotion brought Master Brown up the stairs to see what was going on, and he was also arrested. So were the three conspirators taken.

On the person of Barnard was found a package of papers giving many important details of the besieging army, and a set of maps covering the entire line of fortifications. These were in the hand of Major Jordan, proving that he was in the service of the British.

"This is a fine piece of work," Colonel Thompson declared, when he had finished his examination of the documents, "and due principally to you two lads. I shall take pleasure in reporting that fact to the Commander-in-chief. You must also go back to our quarters with us. This is now no place for you."

So Tom and Sam went back to the other building, where they were given the room formerly occupied by the captured Major. On coming down to breakfast the following morning, they found that the tidings of their night's work had preceded them, and that they were already the lions of the quarters. They bore

the congratulations which poured in upon them modestly, however, and showed no special elation when, later in the day, they were summoned to an interview with General Washington. Still they would hardly have been human had there not been some secret exultation in their hearts as they accompanied the orderly back to the Commander's headquarters.

They entered the presence of the General alone. He arose to greet them as they came in, saying pleasantly:

"Master Thomas Foster and Master Samuel Lyman, I believe?"

"Yes, sir," they answered.

"Well, which is Tom and which is Sam?" he asked with a twinkle in his eye.

At once put at their ease, the boys made known their identity, and then the officer continued:

"Sit down, lads, and tell me all about your adventure of last night. I find there is nothing like hearing a story from the lips of those who know the most about it."

Thus encouraged Tom, as spokesman, related the incidents which had culminated in the cap-

ture of the three prisoners. Washington listened attentively, and, when he was done, said:

"It was fortunate for our cause that we had two clear heads and resolute hearts down at Master Brown's last evening. Many an older person would not have done so well. Permit me to thank you for the service rendered us. I desire also to say if you care to change your plans I will see that both of you have warrants as sergeants in the army."

The cheeks of both lads flushed with pleasure at this offer of the great commander, but they replied decisively:

"Thank you, sir, but we'd rather enter the navy."

"I anticipated such a reply," the General responded with a smile. "Therefore I am going to ask a favor of you. Will you take two letters to Philadelphia for me?"

"Certainly, sir," they answered simultaneously.

"Here they are," he went on, opening a drawer in the table and taking out two sealed packages. "One is for Master John Hancock,

the President of Congress; and the other is for a Master Paul Jones, a Virginian like myself, but who is now stopping in Philadelphia. I think Master Hancock can tell you where he resides. Please see that the messages are delivered only to the persons to whom they are addressed."

"No one else shall have them, sir," the lads promised, and each, taking a letter, placed it within the pocket of his coat. Then the interview ended.

On the following morning in company with Nathaniel Fanning they went out to Brighton, where they took the stage for Providence, arriving there late that evening without mishap. The next day they made a shorter journey, stopping over night at the tavern in Hopkinton. The third day's travel brought them to New London, where they were delayed two days by a storm and by the Sabbath. This gave them an opportunity, however, to visit the forts on both sides of the Thames river, which in later months were to be the scene of a most heroic struggle against fearful odds.

Resuming their journey on Monday morning they traveled by easy stages through Saybrook and New Haven to New York, where they were again delayed for nearly three days, or until the next trip of the weekly stage to Philadelphia. They did not, therefore, reach their destination until Wednesday evening, December 20th.

The next morning they made an early call upon Master John Hancock for the double purpose of reporting their own arrival, and delivering the letter General Washington had sent. The President of Congress received them cordially, and, laying the message of the Commander-in-chief of the army one side, with the declaration that it would wait awhile before it received his attention, he asked them of their journey as though that was of chief concern. Finding they had spent a day and a half with the army at Cambridge he, turning to Nathaniel Fanning, inquired :

"What is your opinion of the siege General Washington is maintaining?"

"That it is so effective the British will be obliged to evacuate Boston before a great while,

sir," young Fanning replied. "In fact, as soon as cannon can be placed on Dorchester Heights both the British army and the British fleet will be at the mercy of our commander-in-chief, and General Howe will have to give up the town."

"I am glad to hear you say that," Master Hancock responded. "It coincides with my own view of the situation, and I expect to hear of the enemy's departure before April first." *

Then addressing the lads as well as their companion he went on:

"You have arrived here just in time. To-morrow our committee on naval affairs will offer a resolution creating a Colonial Navy. It will be adopted without dissent. The bill provides for four ships, all of which have been selected, and commissions a complete set of officers. In the list your names will appear, Master Fanning having the rank of a third lieutenant, and Masters Foster and Lyman the rank of midshipmen, so in a little more than

* As a fact the British evacuated Boston March 17th, 1776, or two weeks earlier than Master Hancock here predicted.

twenty-four hours we shall have a naval squadron, and you will be full-fledged naval officials. Shall I congratulate you?"

"We are the ones to thank you, sir," Nathaniel Fanning answered earnestly, and speaking for himself and his comrades, after which they all arose to depart. Before bidding their kind friend good morning, however, Tom asked:

"Could you tell us, sir, where to find a gentleman named Paul Jones, he comes from Virginia, I think, but is now stopping somewhere in town?"

"Most assuredly I can," Master Hancock replied. "You will find him at the house of Mistress Elizabeth Ross on Arch Street." Then he added banteringly:

"How quick you fellows of the navy are to look each other up."

"Is he a naval officer?" the lad asked in surprise.

"He will be—the senior lieutenant of the fleet—and we expect to hear good things from him. I'm glad you are to meet him before to-morrow. Possibly you will be assigned to the

same vessel, though that is not fully determined. Good morning."

"Good morning, sir," the trio responded, and left the house in search of Lieutenant Jones.

Fortunately they found him in, and, merely explaining they were from Cambridge, handed him the package General Washington had given them.

"Sit down, while I read it," he said courteously. "Possibly I shall wish to ask you about my friend's welfare."

They complied with his request, while he, breaking the seal of the wrapper, took out a closely written manuscript, which he proceeded to peruse.

His face changed rapidly with the reading. First there came a look of surprise, which speedily gave place to one of great interest, and then in turn became one of intense enthusiasm. Tossing the missive one side, he came over to his callers, asking abruptly:

"Which of you is Nathaniel Fanning, and which Thomas Foster, and which Samuel Lyman?"

They told him.

"Do you know what is in that letter?" he next inquired.

"No, sir," Tom answered. "It was given to us sealed, with only a request that we deliver it to you."

"You are to enter the navy," he now said, more as the statement of a fact, than of asking a question.

"We have just come from the presence of Master John Hancock, who has assured us we are to have our commissions to-morrow," the lad replied.

"Well, let me tell you my friend Washington has written me of a little incident which took place at the house of one Jerry Brown in Cambridge on the night of December fourth, of the stranding of a British frigate in John's Bay two days before, and of the capture of the sloop *Margaretta* off Machias last June. He declares these events prove that you, young men, are the kind of timber I need for my ship. I agree with him. The *Alfred*, lying off the Chestnut Street wharf, is to be my vessel, and in the ab-

sence of Captain Dudley Saltonstall, who is to be her commander, I am to take charge of her. I shall see that all three of you are given berths with me. You will hear from me later in the day. Where are you stopping?"

They informed him, and then went back to their boarding place. That evening he called upon them, announcing:

"I have seen the naval committee, also Master Hancock, and it is arranged. You are to be assigned to my ship. Send your baggage down to her in the morning, and then meet me at the State House* at ten o'clock, for immediately after the passage of the resolution creating a Colonial Navy, Congress is going to adjourn, and proceed in a body down to the *Alfred*, where her pennant will be broken out, and she will be placed in commission. I desire all of my officers to be with me."

At the hour designated the trio approached the State House steps, where they were met by Lieutenant Jones, and, entering the hall with him, they were interested spectators of the Con-

* Now known as Independence Hall.

gressional proceedings which made the four stanch ships, *The Alfred*, *The Columbus*, *The Cabot*, and *The Andrea Doria*, a Continental fleet, and which commissioned themselves, along with a score of others, officers in the new navy.

It was nearly noon when this work had been completed, and the chairman of the committee on naval affairs had requested the adjournment of the august body "long enough to render its enactment an accomplished fact."

Then two abreast, headed by President Hancock and Lieutenant Jones, and followed by a squad of newly constituted officials, Congress went down Chestnut Street to the river, where a half dozen yawls were waiting to receive it. Embarking in the boats the entire party was rowed out to the ship, which was anchored in mid-stream. Mounting to her deck they gathered about the mainmast, where John Hancock, in loud but dignified tones, said:

"Lieutenant Paul Jones, as the senior officer of the Continental Navy here present, I direct you to take temporary command of the ship *Alfred*, and to break out her pennant."

"I accept that command, sir," Lieutenant Jones replied with no less dignity, "and proceed to obey your order."

As he spoke a sailor handed him a roll of bunting, to which hoisting ropes were already attached. With his own hands the officer ran the roll up to the mast-head, and then with a quick jerk broke the binding cords. The next instant, caught in the stiff breeze, the flag unfurled, revealing thirteen alternate stripes of red and white with a rattlesnake undulating diagonally across them, while beneath the reptile was the motto: "Don't tread on me." *

As the pennant floated out above the heads

* The authorities differ as to the flag Lieutenant Jones at this time unfurled. Some say it was the "Pine Tree" flag—that is, a white flag embellished with a green tree, and bearing the words: "An Appeal to Heaven." Others declare it was a yellow silk flag, with a Pine Tree and a coiled rattlesnake at the center, and underneath the motto as given above. But a portrait of Commodore Hopkins, commander of the fleet, published by Thomas Hart, London, in August 1776, represents him holding in his hand the flag I have described. Good authorities also affirm this was the flag used at the time the *Alfred* was put in commission. Without attempting to settle the controversy I have followed these authorities, regarding their statement as reliable as any.

of the assembled men, they gave three rousing cheers, and the ceremony was over. The good ship *Alfred* was in commission. The Colonial Navy was a fact.

CHAPTER V.

A PERILOUS UNDERTAKING.

On the day the *Alfred* went into commission not one of her sister ships was ready for sea. They were still undergoing the alterations necessary to change them from merchantmen to vessels of war. Their crews were yet to be enlisted, and few if any of their officers had arrived.

Nor had the *Alfred* completed her own complement of men. For some days after the unfurling of her pennant, therefore, Lieutenant Jones and his subalterns were busy rating the recruits who came pouring on board.

When her full quota was reached, there came the added work of training the newcomers in the handling of the guns, in the use of small arms, and in the furling and unfurling of the sails. Here Lieutenant Jones proved to be an adept, his familiarity with armed vessels, and

the command of numerous crews, having furnished him with all the information essential to the management and discipline of a man-of-war, and within a few weeks he transformed his raw recruits into expert man-of-war's men.

As the days passed young Fanning and his comrades rejoiced more and more at the good fortune which had placed them not only in the flagship of the little squadron, but under a man who was so clearly the ablest executive officer in the whole fleet. His frank, open way with his men, his courteous treatment of his subalterns, soon made him exceedingly popular among the entire crew *—a popularity which Captain Saltonstall and Commodore Hopkins when they came on board in no way lessened.

Quick to recognize true merit also, the senior lieutenant soon showed his appreciation of the abilities and faithfulness of the three young officers who had come to him from Maine; and

* This statement differs from that given by some authorities, but is substantiated by this fact: Some of his men of their own choice went with him from the *Alfred* to the *Providence*, from the *Providence* to the *Ranger*, and from the *Ranger* to the *Bon Homme Richard*.

long before the squadron was ready for sea a personal attachment between himself and his younger colleagues developed that was destined to furnish them with opportunities for service which otherwise might have fallen to the lot of older men.

One by one the other vessels of the fleet went into commission, and dropped anchor near the flagship. Nearly two months had elapsed, however, before the last one was ready, and the signal was run up to the peak of the *Alfred* for the squadron to get under weigh.

It was a bitter cold day in February, 1776. The river was full of floating ice; the wind blew strong from the southeast; heavy clouds were overcasting the sky; a storm seemed imminent. Still the crews of the four ships hailed the signal with delight. Tired of their moorings they thought even the encounter of a gale at sea preferable to remaining longer cooped up in the river, and obeyed the commands of their officers with an alacrity which soon put the vessels under a cloud of canvas.

They made a pretty sight as they tacked

down by Windmill Island. The *Alfred* was the first to leave her anchorage, but the *Andrea Doria* followed close, while the *Cabot* and *Columbus* disputed with each other for the third place. A great crowd on the wharves cheered the frigates as they departed, and the sailors, unchecked by their commanders, returned the cheers lustily.

But the voyage proved of short duration, for on reaching Reedy Island a signal went up for the fleet to anchor under its lee for the night—an order which proved to be a grave mistake. For before morning the wind had shifted into the northwest, driving huge quantities of ice down around the anchored ships, which the intense cold froze into a solid mass, holding them fast.

"Here we are stuck fast in the ice, and likely to remain here the rest of the winter," Midshipman Foster remarked to Lieutenant Fanning as they, later in the day, paced the quarter-deck together.

"It will hold us for some time, I admit," the Lieutenant responded with a slight laugh, and, lowering his voice, he went on:

"It has turned out just as Lieutenant Jones said it would. I heard him tell Commodore Hopkins last night that we should be caught in here. He declared the gale was going to blow over, the wind shift into the northwest, and the ice drive in around us. He wanted to keep on down the river, and find an anchorage, if we made one, nearer the open sea. Perhaps after we have been in here a week, the Commodore will think he was right."

Whatever reply the younger officer might have made was prevented by the sudden appearance of Captain Saltonstall on the deck accompanied by Lieutenant Jones.

"If we try it at once," the latter was saying, "we may be successful; but every hour's delay makes the probability of that success less certain, as the ice is constantly increasing in strength."

"How would you do it?" questioned the commander looking off over the ice-floe.

"I would use powder to blow up the ice ahead of us until we reached open water," Lieutenant Jones explained, "and then the

other vessels, breaking their way down to our track in a similar manner could follow us out."

"But it will take a great deal of powder," objected the Captain.

"Which we can make up by capturing the first British man-of-war we run in with," was the Lieutenant's blunt reply.

"I will take the matter under consideration," Captain Saltonstall remarked stiffly, "but your scheme seems to me very impracticable."

He returned to the cabin leaving his executive officer to brood over his last words in evident impatience, for he walked back and forth across the deck with constantly quickening strides, until his eye fell on the junior lieutenant and his companion. Then he called them to his side.

"Lieutenant Fanning," he said when they had joined him, "suppose I should direct you and Midshipman Foster to take a squad of men and a keg of powder and break a way out to the open sea, what would you do?"

"We should obey orders, sir," was the prompt reply.

"Yes, but how would you carry them out?" queried Lieutenant Jones, smilingly.

Young Fanning glanced off over the ice field, thinking intently. He understood why his superior officer was asking these questions. The Captain had declared that the Lieutenant's proposition was impracticable, and he wished to ascertain what another—a man as resolute and determined as himself—thought about the matter. The sympathy of the junior officer was with his questioner, but he did not intend to allow that to bias his judgment. Was the plan of Lieutenant Jones feasible? If ordered to carry it out, and left to his own judgment, how would he go to work? As he queried with himself his eye fell upon the nearest route to the open water, and instantly his decision was made.

"I should send Midshipman Foster on ahead with the men to drill two rows of holes in the ice a dozen or fifteen feet apart, telling them to take care to go well down into but not quite through the mass. Then I should follow them up, loading the holes myself to make sure the

charges were shielded from all dampness, and were furnished with fuses of sufficient length so that I could explode a number of them at the same moment. In that way the force of one charge would supplement the next, and so a continuous channel would be broken out to the sea."

"I wish I might give you the order," responded the officer approvingly, "but I shall not have the privilege. We are in here to stay for many a day, unless Nature is kind enough to open a way for us."

He was right. A week passed, and still the fleet was held in the firm grip of the frost king. Then the temperature, which had been hovering around the zero point, moderated, awaking hopes that the usual February thaw was at hand, and an escape would soon be granted the imprisoned squadron.

On the morning of this day Midshipman Foster was called into the cabin of the Commodore, who handed him a small package, saying:

"Take this message to the Naval Committee at Philadelphia. When you have their answer

return as promptly as possible, for we shall hope to get out of this ice within the next twenty-four hours."

"Yes, sir," the young officer replied, saluting, and hastening away to his own quarters with a wish in his heart that he had been given more explicit directions about his journey. Before reaching his mess-room, however, he had decided upon his course of action.

Leaving the ship, he made his way on the ice to the shore, which he reached in safety. Thence he went across the fields to the nearest farmhouse. As he approached it a man came out from the barn, to whom he said:

"Good morning, sir."

"Good mornin'," the farmer replied, looking his visitor over from head to foot, suspiciously. Then he added: "Be ye from the ships off thar in the ice?"

"Yes, sir," Tom admitted, and then he made known the purpose of his call. "I'm going to Philadelphia. Have you a horse I could hire for the trip?"

"What'll ye give?" inquired the man, with

the air of one who recognized his opportunity to make a good bargain, and intended to use it.

"Five shillings," replied the lad, naming a low price because he had detected the mercenary spirit of his interlocutor.

"I reckon ye better make it ten, an' pay down the cash 'fore ye start," returned the settler doggedly.

"But I shall be back by nightfall," the young officer protested.

"Likely," the man retorted coolly, "but ye won't be back near as quick if ye have to hoof it."

"There are other horses in this neighborhood besides yours," Tom responded, convinced that the man's love of money was stronger than his desire to serve the cause. "I can go elsewhere."

To his surprise the fellow instantly became affable.

"Ye can have the horse for five shillin's an' pay when ye come back, he declared; an' ye won't find a better one in this region, if I do say it."

With these words he re-entered the barn, into which the boy followed him. He was prepared, too, to accept the farmer's words, when he a moment later led out of the stall a fine bay mare, evidently as swift as she was intelligent. Quickly saddling the animal he remarked:

"Thar, ye can mount her an' ride clear to the town without her breakin' her lope. Ye'll find her, too, as kind as she is speedy, an'll wish 'fore ye get back that ye own'd her, if ye be a sailor."

Leading the mare out of the stable, Tom sprang into the saddle, saying enthusiastically:

"I almost wish that now, for she's as fine a beast as I ever rode. You shall have your ten shillings when I come back."

"I'll have more'n that, if ye've got it," muttered the fellow under his breath as the lad rode away. "I reckon ye'll have a message for the commander of that fleet, which he'll never see, sure as my name is Joseph Lamphear," and he gave a low chuckle of satisfaction.

Without a thought of the danger awaiting him Tom rode rapidly up the rough road in the

direction of Philadelphia. Occasionally inquiring his way he reached the town before noon, and at once put the message he carried into the hands of the Chairman of the Naval Committee. Then he went around to the nearest inn, where he secured entertainment for himself and the faithful animal he rode.

It was four o'clock before the reply of the Committee was ready. Meanwhile the temperature had steadily risen, clouds had overcast the sky, the wind had shifted into the northeast, and a heavy fog, amounting almost to a fine rain, had settled down over land and river.

"It's going to be a nasty night," Tom soliloquized as he rode out of town at a quick trot, "and this wind, blowing from where it does, will break up the ice-pack about the ships in a short time. I hope, however, it will hold together until I'm safe on board the *Alfred*."

He urged on his beast at as rapid a pace as the rough going would permit, realizing that unless he did the short afternoon would come to a close before he could reach the farm opposite

the fleet's anchorage, and he would be obliged to make his trip over the ice in the darkness—a rather precarious undertaking.

To add to his discomfort the mist soon changed to a decided downpour, while the wind constantly increased in force. It grew dark also very rapidly, and notwithstanding the speed he made night had come before he reached Master Lamphear's.

A light in the kitchen enabled him to distinguish the dwelling from the other buildings, and riding up to the door he knocked without dismounting. Instantly the door was thrown open by the stalwart farmer himself, who said with a heartiness that was cheering :

"Here ye be. I've ben lookin' for ye this hour. Jump right off, an' come in, while we settle. Bill 'll take the beast."

As he spoke a young negro came out of the house, and took the mare by the bit. Swinging down from the saddle, Tom stepped through the doorway, saying :

"I must not delay, sir. Every moment makes it less likely for me to be able to cross over the

ice to my ship. Here are the ten shillings I promised you."

"I shall take but five," Master Lamphear responded, handing back half of the silver pieces the lad had dropped into his palm. Then he said:

"Ye can't get off to the fleet afoot. I was down by the shore 'fore dark, an' found the ice already broke up."

Having no reason to doubt this statement, the young officer asked:

"What shall I do, then? I must get off to the ship immediately. The fleet cannot sail without the message I bear."

At these words a cunning look came into the man's eyes—a look his visitor did not notice, for he was giving full attention to the offer of assistance which was now made him.

"Wait till ye have put on dry clothin' an' had supper with me; then Bill an' me'll take the skiff an' set ye 'board yer craft."

"Very well," the unsuspicious boy replied, "only let us hurry about it."

He now followed his host across the kitchen

to a door, which the latter threw open, saying:

"Step right in this bedroom. Ye'll find everythin' ready for ye."

The candle the man carried in his hand sent a feeble ray into what seemed to be a sleeping apartment, and, expecting Master Lamphear to follow him with the light, the lad without hesitation stepped along into the room. The next instant the door was slammed to and bolted while the farmer's mocking voice outside called out:

"Make yerself comf'table, ye rebel. Ye won't see any vessel to-night."

The taunting words let a flood of light into the astonished officer's mind. He now concluded that his host was a Tory, and his sudden affableness had merely been to entrap him. Provoked at himself for being so easily duped, he groped about his apartment trying to get some idea of his surroundings.

The inspection was not a long one, for the room, though of considerable size, proved to be destitute of all furniture but a bed. There was

a single window at the farther end, but this had been boarded up on the outside. It was clear the farmer had spent a portion of the day in preparing the room for the reception of his prisoner.

Feeling his way back to the bed Tom sat down upon it to think the situation over. That the object of his jailor was to secure the message he bore he did not doubt, and, though ignorant himself of its contents, he was aware it might be of too serious import to allow it to fall into the hands of an enemy. Should he then destroy it?

Believing this the wiser thing to do, he arose and stepped noiselessly along to the side of the room opposite the window. He was in search of a fireplace, where he could burn the paper, for he had a pocket flint and steel.

He found the chimney, took out the fire-board, and was about to remove the package from the inside of his coat, when an idea came to him. Why could he not escape by the chimney?

He felt of its proportions. It was a huge affair, and had an aperture more than large enough

to receive his body. It was also roughly built, and its irregular sides would afford him a footing. He determined to try it.

Crawling inside he slowly began his grimy climb. Step by step he mounted upward, somewhat stifled by the current of smoke which came from the kitchen fire, yet determined to effect his escape or suffocate. As he got nearer the top of the passage the air became fresher, and he finished the ascent in a better condition than he had anticipated.

On reaching the top he crawled out on the roof, and peered about him trying to get some idea of the best way to descend to the ground. An unexpected circumstance helped him. Bill, the negro, left the stable, and came towards the house with a lantern in his hand. The dim light showed that one side of the roof—that opposite the one the servant was approaching—ran down within six feet of the ground. So down this the escaping lad slid, and, making a quick leap when he reached its lower edge, gained the ground in safety. The next minute he had disappeared in the darkness.

He had no difficulty in finding the shore, where he found the ice, though covered with water to the depth of several inches, still strong enough to bear him. Stepping down upon it, therefore, he proceeded slowly and cautiously out towards the place where the dim lights told him he would find the waiting ships.

He had not gone far when he stepped into an open place, and went down into the cold water. Fortunately there was no great depth, and he was able to clamber out upon the firm ice again; but it was a warning of what he might find ahead of him at any moment, and he proceeded with greater caution.

This care saved him from a repetition of his first mishap, until he had got near enough to distinguish the *Alfred* from her sister ships by her lights. Then he stepped upon what seemed to be a firm piece of ice, to have it suddenly break under his weight, and precipitate him into water of great depth. Down, down he went until he was sure he would never come up. Then he began to rise, and a moment later came out of the hole where he had gone down.

Catching his breath, he swam to the nearest ice and attempted to crawl out, but it broke under his grasp. Again and again he repeated the attempt, only to fail, and all the while he was becoming chilled by the icy liquid that covered him. At length, realizing he must have assistance, or he should drown, he sent up the piercing cry :

"Help! Help!"

CHAPTER VI.

VALUABLE INFORMATION.

THERE were two on board the *Alfred* who, as the night shut down over the imprisoned ship, grew anxious over Tom's prolonged absence. They were Lieutenant Fanning and Midshipman Lyman.

They knew that under the united forces of wind and rain it could not be long before the ice between the vessel and the shore would become unsafe for the pedestrian; and yet they also knew whatever the hour their friend arrived opposite the island, he would make the attempt to cross over to the frigate. They agreed together, therefore, that, whichever one of them happened to be on deck, he should keep a sharp lookout for the coming lad, and be in readiness to give him prompt assistance, if he stood in need of it.

It proved to be Sam's watch when Tom, having exhausted his own strength in his effort to extricate himself from the icy water, sent forth his cry for help. His very first shout in fact reached his listening comrade's ear, and led to some rapid action on his part. By previous arrangement with Lieutenant Seabury—the officer in charge of the deck at that time—the young midshipman had the small yawl ready for instant launching in case the emergency arose; and now, before the second call of the exhausted lad came, he gave the order for the boat to be lowered down upon the ice.

It was quickly done, then six stout sailors, three on each side, grasped its gunwales and began to push it out towards the spot from which the cries for help came, following their officer, who, with a lighted lantern in one hand and a coil of rope in the other, ran on ahead.

It took but two or three minutes to reach the place, where Tom, holding himself up by a grip on the ice which, though not strong enough to bear his whole weight, was sufficient for this purpose, awaited their coming.

"Look out, Sam," he called out faintly as he recognized his rescuer; "you better not come too near. Throw me the rope, I guess I can fasten it about me, and you can pull me out."

Stopping abruptly, for the rotten ice was already bending beneath his own feet, Sam threw the cord out over the head of his unfortunate friend, who grasped it with his benumbed hands and endeavored to pass it about his body. He could not do it, however, nor could he again clutch the ice by which he had heretofore held his head above the water. Only his hold on the line kept him from going down, and this was growing feebler every moment.

Taking in the situation instantly, Midshipman Lyman turned to his men, who were waiting at a safe distance behind him.

"One of you push the yawl out here," he said.

Jack Green, the lightest weight among them, obeyed. As the craft reached his side the officer added:

"Get a firm foothold, Jack, back there a few feet, then I will pass you this line, which you

are to hold taut until you have further orders from me."

When these arrangements were completed, he leaped into the boat. Under his added weight it broke through the ice, but it was what he had expected. Seizing an oar he made his way through the thin barrier in front of him, and in another minute was beside his chilled and exhausted comrade.

It was a hard task to pull the almost unconscious lad up and over the side of the skiff, but he succeeded in doing it. Laying him gently down in the bottom of the yawl, he took the rope from between his stiffened fingers, and attached it to the painter.

"Pull in," he called out to the sailor at the other end; then he gave his whole attention to his rescued companion.

Taking a heavy blanket out from under the rear thwart he threw it over the drenched form of his friend to protect him from the chilly air; then he bent over him chafing his cold cheeks and forehead, saying soothingly:

"We'll soon have you where we can give you

good care, old fellow. The men are pulling us in, and will run us quickly over to the ship's side."

As he spoke they reached the firm ice, and while the sailors were raising the yawl out upon it, the light of the lantern shone full upon Tom's face. It was so deathly white Sam could not help shuddering, yet he knew his comrade was still sensible to his surroundings for his eyes gazed fondly up into his own, and on his lips there hovered a faint trace of a smile. It was the best he could do to tell his rescuer that he appreciated the service which had been rendered him, and knew that he would be taken to the vessel as quickly as possible.

When the boat was again on the solid floe the stout tars, without waiting for their officer to step out if he had a mind to, caught hold of its sides, and, with a hearty shout of "all together, lads," ran the light craft rapidly over to the *Alfred.*

Then the young midshipman was lifted up to her deck, and carried down to his own cabin, where the ship's doctor speedily took him in

hand. As his wet clothing was stripped off, it was noticed that he had no waistcoat on, and a little surprise was felt when this was found inside his shirt all wadded up and tied with his handkerchief. But it was dropped on the floor with the other garments, and for the time escaped further notice.

When the wet and icy clothes had been removed the cold body of the lad was rubbed until he was all aglow, and warm blankets were wrapped about him. Then a hot drink was put to his mouth, and he was told to drain the bowl —a command he promptly obeyed, and with every swallow new life seemed to infuse his veins.

Lieutenant Jones, who had remained with the surgeon during his ministrations, assisting him with a skill scarcely inferior to his own, now called to the steward, saying:

"Here, Scipio, take Midshipman Foster's garments into the galley and have them dried and pressed."

As the negro bent over to pick up the wet clothing, which ever since its removal had been

lying on the floor of the cabin, Tom suddenly sat up in his berth, exclaiming excitedly:

"Wait a moment, Lieutenant Jones! See if there isn't a package inside my shirt, wrapped up in my waistcoat. I put it there when it began to rain. It is the message of the Naval Committee. I hope it has not been seriously injured by the water."

The clothes were overhauled, and the bundle found. Over and over again had the thick waistcoat been folded about the letter, and then tied tightly down with the boy's handkerchief.

Anxiously Tom watched the unwrapping and fell back into his berth with a sigh of relief when he found the moisture had not penetrated the package enough to dampen the wrapper of the document. As for Lieutenant Jones, who had turned over the other garments in his search for the waistcoat, he stood there for a moment looking first at the uninjured message, and then at his own hands which were grimed with a dark substance which resembled soot. Finally he re-examined the young officer's outer clothing, and then, turning toward the lad, who was

watching him from his blankets with a flushed face, he asked:

"What is this stuff all over your coat and trousers, Midshipman Foster? It looks like lamp-black."

"I'm sorry, sir, but it is chimney soot," confessed Tom, going on to tell of his adventure with the Tory farmer without reserve.

The lieutenant listened attentively to the story, and when it was finished he bent impulsively over the berth and kissed the cheek of his subaltern, saying almost reverently:

"I know a hero when I see one, and you have been one to-night. The Commodore shall be told of this," and then he went off to deliver the message to the commander of the fleet.

He must have told the story eloquently to Commodore Hopkins, for that usually cold and impassive officer was stirred enough to say:

"I declare, Midshipman Foster has considerable stuff in him for a boy. Send him to me as soon as he is able to come. I wish to thank him in person for his fidelity."

At dawn it was found that the great ice floe

was broken, and once more the signal was run up to the peak of the flag-ship for the fleet to get under weigh. So it happened that when Tom was again well enough to go on deck the vessels had rounded Cape Henlopen, and were standing straight out to sea.

Soon, however, that course was changed for a more southerly one, and two days later the squadron was under fairer skies and in a warmer climate.

"I believe we are going to cruise among the West Indies," Tom remarked gleefully, on the evening of the second day as he and Sam stood together amidships.

"That means we are to pick up the British ships trading in those waters," his comrade suggested.

"I do not see why we need be particular about that," young Foster retorted. "We ought to be strong enough to whip anything we meet, from a British sloop to a British fleet."

"We might run in with the *Glasgow* for instance," Midshipman Lyman said whimsically. "She would do to begin on."

"I bet she would flee from us if we did," answered Tom, stoutly. "If Lieutenant Fanning could cope with her single-handed and come off best, we ought to so frighten her she would sink out of sight."

His last remark was made because of Lieutenant Fanning's approach, who caught enough of it to reply jocosely:

"If one Yankee can strand a British frigate of twenty-four guns, then eight hundred can put the whole British navy to flight. That's an easy problem, as anybody with Yankee blood in them can see."

Then he continued even more banteringly:

"What great scheme are you hatching up now, lads? You have had more of adventure, both of you, since we left Philadelphia, than all the rest of the crew. Isn't that enough to satisfy you, or do you want some venturesome incident every day?"

"We might manage to get along with one adventure each day, Lieutenant Fanning, provided it were a hazardous one," Midshipman Foster retorted in the same spirit. Then he

explained what he and his companion had been talking about.

"I do not think any one but the Commodore knows just where we are going, or what is the special object of this cruise," the lieutenant replied. "But I think we will attempt to capture anything we see flying the English flag."

His surmise was a correct one, for early the next morning two British sloops were discovered not over two miles away, and a signal was immediately hoisted for the *Andrea Doria* which was the fastest sailer of the fleet, to give chase to the more distant one, while the *Alfred* herself ran down to intercept the other.

There was not over a half-mile difference in the distance of the Britishers, however, so it happened, when they, after a vain effort to get away, hove to at the sound of the guns of the pursuing ships, that the boats of the *Andrea Doria* and of the *Alfred*, which were to go over and take possession of them, touched the water at precisely the same instant.

Noticing this Lieutenant Fanning, who was

in charge of the yawl from the flag-ship, said to Midshipman Foster who sat beside him:

"We must reach and capture our vessel before the other crew does the one they are after. Then we shall have the honor of securing the first prize of the cruise."

"Of course we must," assented his subaltern enthusiastically, and at a nod from the lieutenant he gave the necessary order to the men:

"Pull away, lads! We must beat the boat of the *Andrea Doria*, and reach our sloop first. Pull!"

"Aye! aye! sir," the sailors responded, and, catching the enthusiasm of their officers, they bent their backs to the oars with a will, sending the light craft through the water at a terrific speed.

But evidently a similar determination had taken possession of the occupants of the other yawl, for at the same moment they also made a tremendous spurt, and dashed on towards the vessel for which they were bound at a rate as swift as that taken by the first boat.

It was nearly an equal race, for the yawls

were of the same length, and manned by precisely the same number of rowers, and, so far as the eye could estimate, had about the same distance to go.

Nor was this all. The impromptu race had already attracted the attention of the two interested ships, and their crews, crowding the railings, or clambering into the rigging, watched the contest, every now and then giving vent to their cheers as they imagined the boat they favored was displaying any vantage over its opponent.

But there was really no difference in the time made by the racing crafts. At the same moment they dashed up to their respective vessels; at the same instant their officers mounted the decks of the Britishers, and demanded their surrender. But there was a difference in the setting of the signals which announced that the captures had been made. A full minute before the commander of the *Andrea Doria* prize crew ran up the announcement that he had taken the *Hiram Holmes*, a British sloop loaded with sugar and molasses, Lieutenant Fanning flung

out the flags showing he was in possession of the British coaster, the *Laughing Betty*, loaded with West India products, and bound, like her consort, for Halifax. This gain of a minute, as it afterwards proved, was due to the skill of Midshipman Foster as a signal officer, and so to him more than to any other one person belonged the honor of giving the flag-ship the first prize of the cruise.

"I wonder if we shall be sent back to Philadelphia with her," Tom remarked to Lieutenant Fanning after the inventory of the *Laughing Betty's* cargo had been completed, and he was about to go back to the *Alfred* with the report.

"I hope not," replied the lieutenant. "I'd rather remain with the fleet."

"So had I," assented the lad, "but the sloop is too fine a one to sink or burn."

"The Commodore may decide not to do either," responded young Fanning.

"What then?" questioned the subaltern in some surprise.

"Give her a strong crew, and have her accompany the squadron," answered his compan-

ion; and this was the course taken with both of the captured vessels.

Their captains and mates—on the ground that they were the only ones who could properly navigate the sloops, and so the only ones who would be likely to make trouble—were sent on board the flag-ship. Then to their regular crews were added a strong force of Yankee tars; a bow gun was mounted on each; the Continental flag was run up to their peak; and so, rechristened to the service of the Colonies, they were ordered to follow in the wake of the frigates.

Lieutenant Fanning was made commander of the sloop he had captured, with Midshipman Foster as his first officer—an arrangement very satisfactory to both save in one particular: it separated them for a time at least from their comrade, Midshipman Lyman.

Augmented from four to six vessels the fleet spread out into a semicircle with a radius of three or four miles, and thus not only made an imposing appearance, but suggested its purpose —that of sweeping the seas.

Towards evening of the day following the capture of the sloops one of the original crew of the *Laughing Betty*—an old salt who had gone about his duties under the new flag with apparent zest—approached Tom, who was in charge of the deck, and touching his cap respectfully, asked:

"May I have a word with you, sir?"

"Certainly," the young officer replied pleasantly.

"I notice they call you Foster, sir—Midshipman Foster; may I ask where ye hail from?"

"Machias, the province of Maine," * answered the lad, wondering why the question was asked.

"I thought so," continued the sailor; "be ye any relative of Benjamin Foster?"

"He is my uncle," responded Tom, with still greater surprise. "My father is Worden Foster, the village blacksmith."

"That's where I've see ye," the old man went on musingly. "A few years ago I was in Ma-

* At this time Maine was a province under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts.

chias. Was sent thar to be one of the crew of a new vessel. She wasn't launched 'til arter I got thar, an' 'mong the crowd on her deck when she slid into the water was a little shaver named Foster. He got too near the rail an' toppled overboard. Thinkin' he'd drown, I leaped arter him, but, lor'! he could swim like a fish, an' seein' me arter him he streaked it for the shore like lightnin'. Beat me by as much as two rods, an' when I crawled out was a laughin' an' wringin' the water out of his clothes as though goin' in swimmin' with his garments on was an everyday 'musement."

Laughing heartily the midshipman put out his hand, saying:

"I suppose I was that 'little shaver,' Master Hewes. When I saw your name on the sloop's roll, I had no idea it was any one I had ever seen before. I am glad to meet you."

The old sailor, evidently greatly pleased at his reception, took the proffered hand, shaking it heartily. Then he asked, sweeping his hand around to encircle the fleet:

"Ain't this a new wrinkle?"

"The squadron?" queried the officer. "Oh, yes. But it will not be long before the ocean will be covered with just such crafts. The Colonies mean business now."

"I reckon they do," the man returned, "an' from this time ye can count Dave Hewes with them. But where are ye bound?"

"I do not know," responded Tom, hardly knowing whether to reprimand the old sailor for his familiarity or to let it pass.

"I'll tell ye why I asked," went on the old salt eagerly, but lowering his voice. "Why don't ye go down to New Providence, an' capture the forts thar? The two garrisons have only 'bout a hundred men, an' thar's quantities of guns, an' small arms, an' ammunition, an' provisions thar. 'Twould be a great haul for ye."

"Come and talk it over with Lieutenant Fanning," responded Midshipman Foster quickly, for he was impressed with the fact that the sailor had given him information of great value.

Master Hewes willingly complied with this request, and during the interview gave a description of the location of the two forts, an

account of their armament, and also assured his hearers that he could take the fleet into the harbor by day or by night.

When these items had been written out, the *Laughing Betty* ran down close to the *Alfred* and signaled that she wished to communicate with her.

The flag-ship immediately hove to, and ran up an order for a boat to be sent over to her. So Tom, with what he regarded as an important document in his pocket, entered the sloop's yawl and gave his men the command to pull away.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNSUCCESSFUL RUSE.

As Tom mounted the deck of the flag-ship he was met by Lieutenant Jones, who, after greeting him warmly, conducted him across the deck to the place where both Commodore Hopkins and Captain Saltonstall were standing. Saluting these officers in turn, the midshipman handed the former the missive he bore, simply saying:

"Here is a communication from Lieutenant Fanning, sir, and I am to await your reply."

"Very well, I will keep you no longer than really necessary," the commander of the fleet responded pleasantly, taking the letter, and going into his cabin.

For a few minutes the lad remained where he was, conversing with the captain and lieutenant, and answering their questions about the *Laughing Betty* and her crew. But they were too polite to make any inquiries about the special

matter which had led the sloop to communicate with the *Alfred*, and the young subaltern did not regard himself at liberty to allude to it.

At length Captain Saltonstall remarked:

"I presume you would be glad to visit the officers of your old mess, Midshipman Foster, and you may do so. I will send for you when Commodore Hopkins has his answer ready."

"Thank you, sir," Tom replied in delight, and hastening away to find Sam.

He did not have a long search; for his chum —though down below at the time of his arrival —had now learned of his visit, and was on the lookout for him. They met at the companion way leading down into the mess-room, and, descending to their old quarters, they were soon talking earnestly together.

In some detail the visitor told of his life on board the prize, concluding:

"It would be fine if we could only have you along with us, Sam."

The latter shook his head.

"I do not believe I care to be with you," he said.

"Why not?" questioned his comrade in complete surprise.

"If we sight other merchantmen, you fellows will have nothing to do with chasing them up," he explained, "and should we run in with a man-of-war, you would not be in the fight. No, I guess I'll stay here and take my chances."

"I hadn't thought of that," admitted Tom dolefully. "It does rather put us on a back shelf, doesn't it?"

Then he thought of the message which he had brought to the Commodore, and wondered, if it were acted on, whether the crews of the captured sloops would have any part in the attack on the forts. With the large forces in the four frigates it did not look as though their services would be required, and, for the first time since he was assigned to the *Laughing Betty*, he felt dissatisfied with his position. Clearly should there be a fight on either the land or the sea, Sam would be more likely to participate in it than he, and he almost envied him his opportunity. Before he could make his thoughts known, however, one of the negro stewards came

to tell him the commander wished to see him. Bidding his friend a hearty good-by, therefore, he went aft to the Commodore's cabin.

That officer was alone when he entered, and as the lad stood before him, cap in hand, he asked:

"Do you know the contents of this communication, Midshipman Foster?" and he pushed across the table towards him the document he had brought from Lieutenant Fanning.

"Yes, sir," the boy replied; "I was present when Master Hewes told his story."

"Well, you may read that," the Commodore added, pushing a second paper towards him.

The subaltern, picking it up, saw that it was a message from the Naval Committee of Congress —the one he had himself brought from Philadelphia the night before the sailing of the squadron as the date showed—and, with more than usual interest on that account, he read it. It was brief, and contained the final sailing orders to Commodore Hopkins, directing him to proceed as expeditiously as possible to the island of New Providence, in the Bahamas, and seize the guns

and large stores of ammunition and provisions known to be held there.*

"So that is where we are bound," he exclaimed when we had perused the letter, "and the information I have brought is of no importance."

"Say not so, Master Foster," the Commodore answered kindly. "It is of especial importance to have with us a man who is acquainted with the island—with its harbor, and with the location of the forts. To-morrow morning I shall call the captains of the fleet to a conference, and here is an order to Lieutenant Fanning to bring Master Hewes with him when he comes to the council. Furthermore I desire to thank you for your quick apprehension of the value of the sailor's disclosure. Had we been ignorant of the situation at New Providence the information given you would have been of unusual value; and as it is it may enable us to capture both garri-

* Some authorities say Commodore Hopkins sailed from Philadelphia with orders to capture New Providence, others declare he obtained his information of the forts from a sailor on the captured sloop. I have accepted both statements as not inconsistent with each other.

sons without the loss of a single man," and he bowed his head in intimation that the interview was ended.

Tom returned to his boat, and went back to the sloop, pondering over the last sentence of the Commodore. When in the cabin of the *Laughing Betty* with Lieutenant Fanning, he, with that freedom which was always allowed between himself and his friend when they were alone, told of his interview with the commander of the fleet, and repeated his last words, asking:

"What do you suppose he meant by that, Nathaniel?"

The lieutenant smiled.

"It is not given me to read the mind of Commodore Hopkins," he said, "but I should judge he meant this: That, now we have with us a man who can pilot the ships into the harbor by day or by night, we can make use of strategy and capture the place without danger to the vessels or their crews."

"But why need we do that?" exclaimed the midshipman impetuously. "Surely we are

strong enough to bombard the forts, land our marines, and sweep the hundred men off into the sea."

"You overlook the fact that they have more cannon than our whole fleet carries, and can do a little shooting themselves before we get into the harbor, or land our men," Lieutenant Fanning responded. "It might be that one or more of our ships would be sunk before we got near enough to them to 'sweep them into the sea,' as you suggest. Certainly if I were in command of the squadron I should seek to achieve the object for which I was sent with as little damage to my ships, and as small a loss of my men as possible; and I take it that is all the Commodore meant by what he said."

"Yes," assented his companion, "but whatever plan he decides on it don't look as though you and I, off here in this little sloop, would be given any part in the affair. Sam stands a good deal better chance of being assigned to the work than we do."

"Oh! that is where the boot pinches, is it?" Master Fanning answered with a laugh. "You

want to be in the fray? That is commendable, of course, but we must always remember, Tom, that we are not all the fleet, nor all of its crew. I presume many of our comrades envied us when we were sent to take possession of this sloop, and then placed in command of her. Now we must, if in the wisdom of those who are in command it seems best, step to the rear, and give others a chance. It is their right, and we should be magnanimous enough to rejoice at their good fortune as they have at ours."

"I know we must," Tom returned with a sigh, "but nevertheless I cannot help wishing something may happen so we can participate in the coming attack. I should like——"

"To be the first one over the parapet into the fort," broke in the lieutenant, finishing his sentence for him, "which proves you have the right spirit in you, even if you are not given the opportunity to prove it," and there the conversation closed.

But the lad was rejoiced to hear his friend say when he returned from the conference of the fleet captains the next morning:

"Well, Tom, we are in it," though he offered no further explanation of his words.

That some plan of action had been decided upon was evident, however, the moment the squadron resumed its voyage. For the vessels, instead of spreading out in a crescent shape as they had done prior to the council, now took the form of an inverted V, the flag-ship occupying the position of advance at the point, while the captured sloops brought up the rear, one at each end of the diverging lines.

The course sailed was a direct one for New Providence Island, and early the next morning a signal went up from the *Alfred* that it had been sighted by the lookout on her foremast.

At this announcement, as though prearranged, the *Cabot* and the *Hiram Holmes* ran down to the *Andrea Doria*, while the *Columbus* and the *Laughing Betty* came up under the lee of the flag-ship. The moment this was done the whole fleet obtained an inkling of the ruse which was to be employed in securing possession of the British forts.

The bow guns on the two sloops were taken

aft, and covered. Fifty men from the *Alfred*, and fifty from the *Columbus*, were immediately sent over to the *Laughing Betty*, while the *Andrea Doria* and the *Cabot* each furnished a similar number for the *Hiram Holmes*. Thus a hundred men, in addition to their working crews, were put on board of each prize vessel. These men were, however, promptly concealed between the decks, where they were to remain until the hour arrived for landing and attacking the garrisons.

When this transfer had been completed, Lieutenant Jones was put in command of both vessels with orders to proceed into the harbor of the island as though the sloops were only harmless traders. In this way it was hoped not only to allay all suspicion on the part of the British that an enemy was near, but to secure an anchorage sufficiently near the beach to permit of the disembarking of the two hundred sailors under the cover of the following night. Then, as the next morning dawned, a sudden attack was to be made upon the forts, which it was believed, taken by surprise and unprepared for

the hand to hand engagement, would quickly surrender. When the garrisons were captured, three guns at intervals of a minute were to be fired, and the four frigates, which until then were to remain hove to out of sight of the island, were to approach.

The ruse seemed a feasible one, and, with high hopes of success, the sloops about noon left the squadron, and sailed directly for the harbor. The *Laughing Betty*, piloted by David Hewes, took the lead, while the *Hiram Holmes* followed, though not close enough to suggest they were acting together.

All went well until the leading sloop had rounded the northeastern point, and was near the bar which lies across the mouth of the beautiful haven; then, to the surprise of all, there came a sudden puff of smoke from the nearest garrison, followed almost immediately by the roar of a cannon, and an instant later a ball skipped over the surface of the bay towards the approaching craft.

"I wonder what that means," Lieutenant Jones, who had his quarters on the *Laughing*

Betty, remarked to Lieutenant Fanning, who stood near him.

"Possibly it is only a hint for us to show our colors," suggested his comrade. "They may not be allowing any vessel to enter the offing without declaring her nationality."

"We will soon find out," Master Jones replied, giving an order for the English flag to be run up the mast.

But the display of that banner made no difference. Again the redcoats fired, and this time with such accuracy that the bowsprit and a part of the larboard railing of the sloop were carried away.

"This is getting interesting," muttered the senior lieutenant, as he hurried forward and scanned the pugnacious fort with his glass.

"For some reason they are suspicious of us," his colleague, who had accompanied him down the deck, declared. "See, the other garrison is opening fire, and it is at the other sloop. And there comes another shot at us."

As he spoke both fortifications began a furious fusilade upon the innocent looking vessels.

Shot after shot fell thick and fast about them. It was clear that they were not going to be suffered to enter the harbor, and, chagrined at the defeat of his plan, Lieutenant Jones gave an order for both sloops to withdraw beyond the reach of the cannon.

When this had been done, the plucky officer announced his next movement.

"I do not wish to return to the squadron," he said to Lieutenant Fanning, "until I have some idea why we are not allowed to approach the town. You may order out the yawl under charge of Midshipman Foster."

When this was manned with six stalwart sailors, he took his seat beside his young subaltern, and flying a flag of truce started for the shore.

For a half-mile the small craft was allowed to keep on its way; then a second fusilade was begun by the forts, each one seeking to be the first to sink the advancing boat. Amid the shower of balls the yawl kept on until one struck it knocking off a part of its gunwale, and wounding one of the sailors with the splinters.

"We shall have to give it up," the commander declared between his set teeth. "Even a truce boat is not respected here. Pull back to the *Betty*, lads."

Then Tom, touching his cap, made a suggestion:

"Did you notice that fishing-boat, lying just outside the reef, as we came in, Lieutenant Jones?" he asked.

"Yes," the officer assented; "but why do you ask?"

"Could not we seize that, and learn from its occupants why the forts are suspicious of us?"

"We can at least try," the officer replied heartily.

So when they were back on board the sloop, she was ordered to run over towards the fisher. Scarcely had she started to do so, however, when the captain of that craft, who seemed to be watching the strange vessels, and in no way surprised that they had not been allowed to enter the harbor, pulled up his anchor and tried to escape through a narrow opening in the reef a few fathoms beyond him. But he was not

quite quick enough, and a half-dozen muskets brought to bear upon him and his negro crew led him to obey the summons to come alongside.

He was a tall, intelligent-looking fellow of about twenty years of age, whose grace of manner, and military air, could not be wholly concealed by the rough garments he wore, and, suddenly suspicious that he might be something more than an ordinary fisherman, Lieutenant Jones said to him as his boat touched the side of the *Laughing Betty* :

"Come on board, sir. I wish to hold a consultation with you."

He leaped up from the bow of his own boat, caught the rail of the sloop, and swung himself on board with the ease of an athlete. Then touching his broad-brimmed hat as a subaltern would salute a superior officer, he announced :

"Here I am at your service, sir."

"And an officer of the fort," suggested Lieutenant Jones, significantly.

He laughed heartily.

"Oh ! it is a regular game of give away," he said. "I knew I could not conceal my identity

the moment you overhauled me. I am Ensign Philbrook, sent out here to learn the names of your vessels and to pick up any other information I can about you."

"But why are we not allowed to enter the bay?" inquired his interlocutor.

The young Englishman shrugged his shoulders, remarking drily:

"You have too many men under your decks, sir."

"How did you know it?" persisted the astonished lieutenant.

"You ran too close to the island before you made the transfer from your four frigates,"* Master Philbrook explained with the appearance of one who enjoyed making that disclosure.

"Could you see us?" asked Lieutenant Jones in still greater surprise.

"Yes," the ensign confessed gleefully. "You see, sir, we have a lookout station in the top of one of our tallest trees, and our man there could

* This has been called Commodore Hopkins' "foolish mistake" by some of the historical writers.

see your ships as readily as the lookout at your mast-head could see our island. You'll have to try some other way to surprise us."

Then with something like a braggadocio spirit he added:

"You'll also find us prepared to give you a warm reception whenever you attack us."

"We shall have one less man to fight anyway," retorted Lieutenant Jones grimly, and leaning over the rail he said to the negroes in the fisher: "The sooner you start for the shore the sooner you'll get there—" a hint they were not slow to take.

Then turning to his prisoner he continued:

"We'll go into the cabin, sir, where we can talk at our leisure."

Not at all disconcerted by the misfortune which had befallen him, Ensign Philbrook obeyed his captor's request, saying:

"I thought likely you'd keep me to tell the commander of your squadron why his little ruse failed."

CHAPTER VIII.

A RECONNOITER.

It was not necessary for Lieutenant Jones to give any extended account of his repulse at the mouth of the harbor when he reached the waiting squadron. The vessels had been near enough to the forts to hear the sound of their guns, and the lookout at the masthead of the *Alfred* had through his glass watched each movement of the disappointed officer. Even the capture of the prisoner had been noted, and its purpose, when announced, understood by the commander of the fleet. Scarcely was the *Laughing Betty* within signaling distance, therefore, before the flagship hoisted an order for the lieutenant to bring his captive on board.

As unconcerned as when talking with his captor the British ensign faced Commodore Hopkins, and with even greater zest told of the discovery of the advancing squadron by the

lookout in the tree-top on the island. His manifest delight in telling of the fact greatly displeased the listening officer, and unable to conceal his irritation, he exclaimed:

"Have a care, sir, how you rejoice over our rebuff. Doubtless you are fully aware of the fate which befalls all spies who are found within the enemy's lines."

Both Captain Saltonstall and Lieutenant Jones, who were present at this interview of the young Englishman with their commander, looked aghast at this interpretation of Ensign Philbrook's act—that of watching the sloops from his fishing-boat. The prisoner, however, seemed to regard the declaration as a huge joke, for laughing carelessly, he replied:

"It would be hard to prove that I entered your lines until compelled to do so, wouldn't it, Commodore?"

"When our sloops passed you on their way into the harbor you were within our lines, where you remained until captured," answered the provoked officer with something like triumph in his tones.

Though suddenly aware that the commander was talking seriously, the cheek of the ensign did not blanch, nor did his voice tremble.

"It is strange how differently we look at the same act," he retorted with fine sarcasm. "I thought your vessels, when they passed me, entered our picket lines. I was not aware I moved from a position I had, in obedience to my commander, occupied long before their approach."

Commodore Hopkins bit his lips in his chagrin that a mere stripling had got the best of him in the argument. Then he cried:

"You cannot deny that you are my prisoner, sir, and that it is within my power to load you with irons and put you into solitary confinement."

The captive merely bowed his head in assent, while Lieutenant Jones hastened to ask:

"May he not share my quarters with me, sir? I will be responsible for his safety."

"I have other work for you," was the blunt reply. "Captain Saltonstall, see that the prisoner is secured as I suggested."

The ensign followed the captain from the

cabin, while the lieutenant, his brow dark with the wrath he felt, awaited his superior's commands.

"Send all the extra men on the sloops back to their respective ships, Lieutenant Jones," the Commodore announced; "then get the *Laughing Betty* ready for a cruise down through the channel to the south side of the island. As soon as night comes I want you to go around there and ascertain these two things: Whether there is a suitable harbor there for the fleet; and whether a force can be landed and led across the neck to the rear of the forts. If the first night is not long enough to accomplish these objects conceal yourself in some cove during the day, and complete your work the following night. We shall look for your return on the second morning at the farthest. You will find us lying to a few miles north of here, where we shall be beyond all observation from the island."

With clearing brow the Lieutenant bowed his acknowledgment that he understood his orders, and then departed to carry them out.

Night came with the suddenness of the tropics, but it found the trim sloop ready for her reconnoitering trip. Under the cover of the darkness, and showing no lights which might betray her movements to the regular lookout, or any chance observer, on the island, she slipped away from the rest of the fleet, and bore off to the southwest. Her course carried her near enough to the entrance of the harbor, however, for her watching officers to notice the great fires which had been built on each projecting arm, presumably to detect the approach of the squadron if it attempted a night attack.

Lieutenant Jones, standing near the helm of the *Betty*, smiled grimly as he beheld the flames. Then he remarked to Lieutenant Fanning and Midshipman Foster, who stood beside him:

"I wonder where they will think we have gone when morning comes? The ships will be out of their range of vision, and the island will be between us and them."

"Perhaps they will think we have vanished with the night," Tom suggested humorously.

"They may have lookouts on the south side of the island who will report our presence there," young Fanning said thoughtfully.

"You are right," replied the senior lieutenant quickly, "and we must cover the bow gun before the moon rises lest it proclaim our real character. With that out of sight any one seeing us will be likely to take us for a harmless trader, for they would hardly suspect one of our vessels to be around here alone."

"We will attend to it at once, then it will not be forgotten," Lieutenant Fanning returned decisively. "Midshipman Foster, will you go forward and see to it?"

The subaltern obeyed, and soon what appeared to be only a harmless heap of ropes and canvas occupied the place of the cannon.

Around the west end of the isle the *Laughing Betty* crept, and along the reefs that guarded the shore. Fortunately the wind was light, and the sea quite calm, so no danger attended the search for an opening through the irregular line of coral which would indicate the existence of a safe anchorage on the farther side.

Mile after mile the sloop sailed on, keeping near enough to the rocky barrier to detect, notwithstanding the darkness, the mouth of a channel sufficiently large for her to pass through, if there were one, but the east end of the island was reached without finding such a passage.

The moon peeped above the horizon as the run was completed, and Lieutenant Jones, leaving the bow of the vessel where he had himself kept a sharp lookout on the reef, went aft where he found Lieutenant Fanning.

"We will go back over our course under the moonlight," he announced, "and it may be we shall find some opening through which I can go with a yawl. Let the bow watch report if he finds one. I will also have you, as we return, take frequent soundings to ascertain whether it is possible for the ships to lie at anchor anywhere outside of the reef. With a channel for small boats, and a fair anchorage we might on a calm night like this make a landing. Call me if either shoal water, or narrow passage is found;" then he went down to his cabin.

For an hour the sloop retraced the course

down which she had come. A dozen times the lead had been thrown only to find the water too deep for a ship's cable. Then the forward watch called out:

"Break in the reef, sir; two points off the starboard bow."

Quickly the *Betty* was hove to, and word was sent down to Lieutenant Jones that an opening had been found.

He came promptly to the deck, where he received Lieutenant Fanning's report respecting the soundings which had been made, and the discovery of the passage through the reef.

Together the officers walked forward to view the latter. The moon, nearly full, threw ample light on the coral barrier and surrounding sea, for them to discern quite clearly a narrow and tortuous channel through the rocks to the smooth water beyond.

"Order out the yawl to land Midshipman Foster and myself on the island," the senior lieutenant immediately said. "When it returns you may go on to the west end of the reef, taking soundings every few fathoms. About dawn

come back here and send in the boat for us, we shall be waiting for it."

Five minutes later the light craft, under the steady pull of four stout rowers, made its way through the winding passage, and emerged into the smooth waters of the lagoon. Here Lieutenant Jones stopped for a moment to measure the depth of the water, and finding it sufficient to float the largest ship of the fleet, he remarked regretfully:

"What a pity there is not a wide channel through the reef! The squadron could ride in here with perfect safety, and land the men without trouble. Surely the fates are against us!"

"Could not the ships lay to long enough off this channel to send in the men in small boats?" Midshipman Foster inquired. "We had no difficulty in launching the yawl, or in coming through the reef, and we might have brought a load with us. It would seem to me that, on a still night like this, it would be perfectly feasible to land a force large enough to capture the garrisons."

"I should try it," Lieutenant Jones declared

emphatically, "if we find an easy road across the island, but I am not sure that our Commodore will."

The boat now touched the beach, and the two officers stepped out. Glancing up towards the adjacent woods, the lieutenant called the attention of the sailors to a huge tree that towered many feet above its fellows.

"See that mahogany, lads," he said. "When you return at dawn come straight in towards it, and you will find us waiting for you." Then he sent them away.

As the boat departed Lieutenant Jones touched his companion's arm, saying in a low voice:

"We will go up to that tall tree I spoke to the boys about. I wish to examine it."

Wondering what his purpose could be Tom followed him. They reached the mahogany to find it one of the largest of its kind—several feet through the butt, and many feet high. About the trunk the officer slowly proceeded, feeling of its surface up as far as he could raise his hands. When on its rear, or north side, he suddenly gave an exclamation.

"Ah! I thought so!"

Stepping along beside him the midshipman put up his own hand until it rested on that of his comrade. Then he understood the reason for his exclamation.

At that point there was a small cavity cut into the wood, large enough to receive a man's foot; and a hasty examination showed that there were two rows of these holes chipped out, about eighteen inches apart, straight up the tree. The quick-witted lad instantly understood two things: the meaning of the cavities; and why it was that Lieutenant Jones had desired to visit the stalwart mahogany. It was, as he had suspected, the watch-tower for that side of the island.

"Do you suppose there is any one up there now?" questioned Tom in a whisper.

"I hardly know what to think," his companion answered in the same low tone, and peering up into the tree whose thick top revealed no secrets. "There would be no sense in having a lookout up there before the moon arose; and if one has come across the island since then, it is more than likely that he discovered the sloop before he as-

cended to his perch, and is now watching us from some place of concealment in the woods. But we'll find out."

Then to Tom's astonishment he glanced up into the thick tree-top, and called out in clear tones:

"Hello, up there! Hello!"

No answer came.

"You better reply, and mighty quick too, if you don't want me to put a bullet into you," he continued savagely, and pulling a pistol from his belt he flourished it in the moonlight.

Still no sound came from the dark shadows above his head.

"Ho!" he went on carelessly, "there is no one up there. It's only a day tower. We'll go up along the beach, and look for the path through the forest," and with these words he stalked out of the underbrush, followed by his bewildered comrade, who thought the officer had needlessly betrayed the reason of their landing to the concealed redcoat, if there were one.

They had proceeded but a few rods, however, when the lieutenant stopped and waited for the

midshipman to come up with him. Then merely touching the lad's arm, in token that he was to move with the utmost caution, he re-entered the woods, and began to make his way noiselessly back towards the big tree.

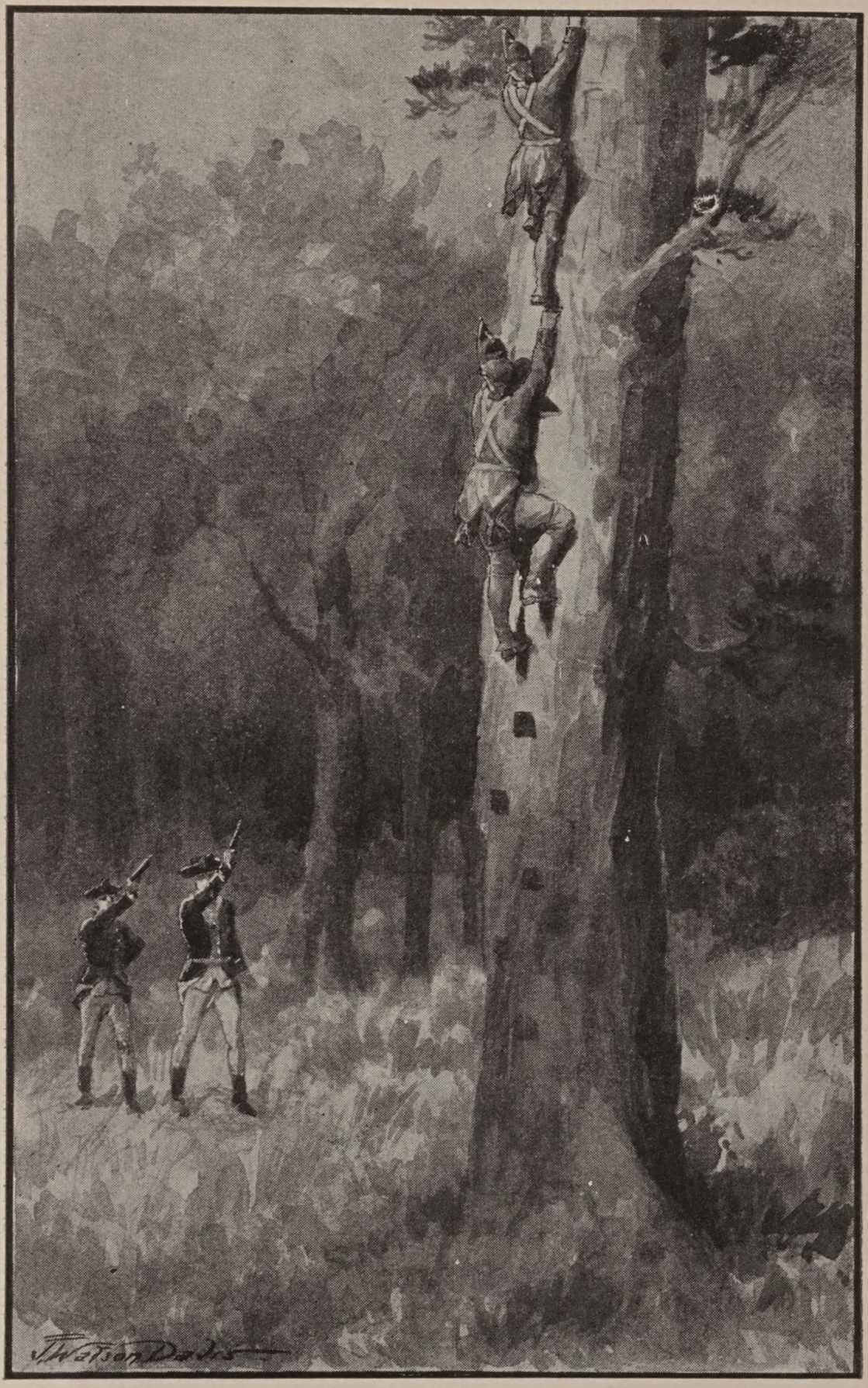
Quickly divining the officer's purpose, Tom kept close at his heels, and they were soon within a few feet of the mahogany. Pushing aside the intervening bushes they glanced up at the huge trunk, and there, half-way down it, and still descending, were two Britishers.

Again Lieutenant Jones touched his comrade's arm, this time holding up the pistol which he had, two minutes before, and while at the foot of the tree, drawn from his belt. The boy understood him, and promptly drew one of his own weapons.

"Cover the upper man, I'll look out for the lower one," the lieutenant said under his breath, and then together the two Continentals stepped out into the opening.

"So you have decided to come down, have you?" Master Jones asked curtly.

The redcoats were so disconcerted by the



"Cover the upper man, and I'll look out for the lower one," said the Lieutenant under his breath. Page 150.

Two Yankee Middies.

sound of his voice that they almost lost their hold upon the tree. Their hurried glance downward was even more disquieting, for there, with pistols drawn and cocked, and having them wholly in their power, were the two officers whom they supposed to be well up the beach.

"They've got us, Jim," the nearer one ejaculated, and looking up at his companion; "we shall have to surrender."

"Well, be quick about it," growled the other. "I can't hang here all night."

"Stay right where you are until I tell you to come down," directed Lieutenant Jones, passing his pistol over to Tom, who forthwith covered both of the soldiers with the weapons.

"Have you any cords about you?" the lieutenant now inquired, at the same time searching his own pockets. "I wasn't counting on our getting any prisoners to-night, and haven't a bit of string about me."

"I have only my handkerchief," responded the lad. "It is in the pocket next to you. We might also use our neckerchiefs; that will be enough to tie their hands."

"Which is all I wish to do," answered the senior officer. "I propose they shall use their feet in our service for a few hours."

As he spoke he unfastened his own, and then his comrade's neckcloth, and tied them together, in this way securing a bond for one of the prisoners. Their united handkerchiefs furnished a cord for the other. When these were in readiness for use, he bade the men to descend one at a time, and in a few moments had firmly bound the hands of both behind them.

"I reckon that'll hold them," he commented when the last knot had been tied. "Now give me my pistol. There! we are ready to march Lead away, men! Take us over to the forts!"

"The best route is around the shore," sullenly remarked the redcoat who had been called Jim.

"How far is it that way?" questioned his captor.

"Four or five miles," the man replied.

"And how near can you get to the forts that way without being seen?"

"Not nearer than a mile on such a night as this," the Britisher admitted. Then by way of explanation he added:

"From our watch-tower over there you can see nearly all the way down the west side of the island."

"And you have a lookout there day and night?"

"We do now, when you fellows are known to be hanging around. That is how we came to be over here."

"Is there not a road through the forest?"

"No, only a trail, and a poor one at that," broke in the other prisoner with the air of a man who did not propose that his companion should do all the talking.

"How far is it across to the garrisons by that route?"

"Two miles direct, but you can't go in a straight line."

"Lead on. We'll try that way."

"You'll have to go single file," demurred the soldier.

"Very well! Remember I have you by the

coat-tail, and shall send a ball through you at the first sign of treachery," retorted Lieutenant Jones. "Jim can follow me, with Midshipman Foster at his back, ready to do him the same favor if it becomes necessary."

With unpleasant grins the prisoners took their places, and the tramp was begun—a tramp which exhausted the strength and tried the patience of the two officers; and yet there was no reason to believe that the captives had misled them. Through underbrush, around thickets, over fallen logs, and under trees whose tops shut out every ray of light, the trail led—and it was a trail which only those who were well acquainted with it could have followed. It was fully two hours before they reached its end, and saw ahead of them, first the village, and then the forts farther down the sides of the harbor.

"You rascals, why didn't you tell me of this?" exclaimed Lieutenant Jones, as they paused at the edge of the woods.

"Tell you what, sir?" the prisoner he had hold of asked in some alarm.

"That we couldn't reach the forts this way without going through the town," the officer explained.

"You didn't ask us, sir," the fellow truthfully replied.

"Well, take the back trail at once," the lieutenant remarked, and pushing the redcoat back into the forest.

The first traces of the coming day were visible in the eastern sky as they again reached the great mahogany. The sails of the sloop could be seen over the reef, showing that she was already in waiting, and in a few minutes the yawl was sent in for them.

On the way out to the vessel Lieutenant Jones suddenly turned to his prisoners, asking:

"When does your relief come over here?"

"At six," they replied. "We are twelve hours on, and twelve hours off."

"Is there a watch-tower on the east end of the island?" was the next query.

"No, sir. It's so far from the harbor we don't look for an attack from that quarter."

The object of these inquiries was evident the

moment the lieutenant mounted to the deck of the *Laughing Betty.*

"Sail directly for the east side of the island," he said to Lieutenant Fanning who stepped forward to greet him. "We must be out of sight around yonder point in another hour. I will receive your report of your latest work after we have found a safe harbor for the coming day."

Away sped the sloop under a stiff morning breeze, and within the allotted time the distant point had been reached, and turned. A mile beyond, a channel through the reefs, wide enough for the *Betty* to pass through, was found, and she was soon lying close in under the wooded shore, where she, after her sails were lowered, was scarcely visible.

All day long she lay there undisturbed, her officers and crew obtaining a much needed rest. Not until late in the afternoon in fact did Lieutenant Jones call for his subaltern's report.

This was brief.

"After the boat returned from the shore, sir," Lieutenant Fanning said; "I obeyed your order

and went as far as the southwestern point of the island, taking frequent soundings. But I could not find a place where the water was not deeper than a cable's length. In short, sir, there is no anchorage for the squadron anywhere along the south shore."

"And there is no road across the island by which a force of men of any size can be taken," responded the senior lieutenant, explaining in further detail his own movements during the previous night. "Our Commodore will have to find some other way to strike the garrisons in the rear."

A little later he said:

"Perhaps we better get through the reef before nightfall, Lieutenant Fanning. We can wait outside until the darkness shields us, and then run back to the fleet."

"Very well, sir," replied the junior officer, and he immediately got the vessel under weigh.

"But scarcely was she outside of the reef, when a sailor on her bow called out:

"Ship ahoy, sir! Right ahead, sir!"

Chagrined at this misfortune the two lieutenants went forward, where they beheld another sloop not a half mile distant, and coming straight down towards them.

CHAPTER IX.

DISCOVERED.

The approaching sloop was a small affair, with dingy sails, and, apparently, a crew of only a half-dozen men. The two officers gazed at her for a few minutes, and then Lieutenant Fanning asked:

"Do you make her out, sir?"

"She looks like a wrecker," Lieutenant Jones replied, "and doubtless belongs here at the island. But, if she has been out of the harbor for several days, she probably knows nothing of the presence of our fleet, and will therefore have no suspicion of our real character. Let her come up."

In five minutes she was within hailing distance, and, luffing up into the wind, a man on her quarter-deck called out:

"Sloop ahoy! Do you want a pilot?"

"She is a pilot boat, and may have come out of the harbor this morning," Lieutenant Jones said in low tones to his companion. "We shall have to capture her and take her along with us." Then raising his voice he replied to his questioner:

"Come alongside, and we'll talk the matter over with you."

"Aye, aye, sir," was the answer, and getting under headway again, the craft came on towards the *Laughing Betty*.

Perhaps to show his skill, or it may be because he was the only competent helmsman on board, the man who had hailed the sloop, and who later proved to be the captain and owner of the newcomer, now took her tiller into his own hands, and brought her under the larboard side of the *Betty* without a perceptible jar. Then, leaping upon the rail of his own boat he caught hold of the gunwale of the larger one, and swung himself on to her deck.

Straightening himself up he began:

"I reckoned you were bound for the harbor, and would want—" then his jaw suddenly

dropped. He had sized up the sloop and her crew, and for the moment was speechless. Then he ejaculated:

"Hang me if ye ain't one of those sloops that tried to get into the harbor yesterday afternoon."

"You are right, my friend," returned Lieutenant Jones promptly, "and we still want to get into the harbor. Can you run us in?"

The man shook his head slowly. "It can't be done," he declared; "they'd sink ye before ye got 'cross the bar." Then he remarked dubiously: "I s'pose my craft's a goner, an' I an' my men are prisoners?"

"Since you know us we shall have to detain you for a short time," the lieutenant admitted. "But it may be nothing more serious if you do the fair thing by us."

"What's that?" asked the man with brightening countenance.

Lieutenant Jones turned to Lieutenant Fanning:

"Send Midshipman Foster and a half-dozen men on board the prize," he commanded. Then

to the pilot he said: "Come down into the cabin, and we'll finish our talk."

When alone with the man the officer looked him over from head to foot with his dark piercing eyes as though he would read his very soul. The fellow shuffled uneasily under the scrutiny, and finally blurted out:

"What is it ye want me to do?"

"Do you own the craft you were in?" Lieutenant Jones inquired.

"Yes, sir, she belongs entirely to me."

"And you would like to save her?"

"It's kinder natural I should," the pilot responded, "seein' she's all I've got to make a livin' by."

"You are acquainted with the shores of this island?"

"Yes, sir, an' nearly every other one in the Bahamas. You see I'm not only a pilot but a wrecker, an' go anywhere I'm likely to find a job. That's made me 'quainted with the isles and reefs from here to Cuba," he explained.

"I think you are the very man we need," Lieutenant Jones remarked with a pleasant

smile, "and that it is possible for you to save your sloop and secure the freedom of yourself and men."

"How?" and there was eagerness in the pilot's tones.

"By telling me of some secluded cove, near the harbor, into which we can take our ships."

The prisoner was silent for a few moments, then he inquired :

"Will your promise 'bout the boat an' crew hold good so long as ye learn of such a place?"

"Yes," assented the lieutenant.

"Nothin' can prevent ye from lookin' over my charts, as I see," the man remarked with a grin, "an' it ain't a tellin' ye when ye find out a thing for yourself."

"Thank you," responded the officer with a quick laugh. "I should be a dullard indeed if I did not take that hint. I think I'll go over to your cabin. You may make yourself comfortable here, or anywhere you please about the sloop until I return."

He went over to the pilot boat immediately

where he found Midshipman Foster already in command.

"I wish to look over the captain's charts," he announced; "perhaps one of the crew can tell you where to find them."

Calling the man who served as mate on the little craft the three descended into the tiny cabin. Opening a locker under the pilot's berth, the sailor asked:

"Which chart did you wish, sir?"

"The one of the island harbor," Lieutenant Jones replied with the promptness of one who knew what he had come after.

The man took out a roll saying:

"This is it."

The two officers took the map and spread it out upon the little table. It was a rude drawing of the entire northern side of the island, evidently made by the pilot's own hand. Their keen eyes noted first, that the course into the little bay was traced out, and that the depth of water to be found all along the route was carefully indicated. Then they saw, that, about a mile to the east of the harbor, a second channel

through the outlying reef was drawn, and marked as having a depth of water which would be sufficient for any vessel in the squadron. Once through this passage it was also clear that the whole shore as far up as the forts themselves would be available for a landing.

They noted all this, and something else which was of nearly as much importance. It was that only a little back from the garrisons the shore suddenly curved inland, suggesting that there at that point was to be found, especially if there were adjacent woods, a place where on a dark night the entire forces of the ships could be disembarked without attracting the attention of the enemy.

Their enthusiasm at this discovery could not be restrained.

"Here is our work for this night, Tom," the lieutenant exclaimed, and dropping into a familiarity which was not common with him. "The Commodore will not look for us before morning, so we shall have time to verify this chart by making a personal examination of that channel and its immediate surroundings."

"May I offer a suggestion?" responded the midshipman, unable to conceal the excitement that was tingling in his own veins.

"Certainly, my dear lad; what is it?" the senior officer kindly answered.

"That we start on this trip at once, and in this craft, sir. Her coasting along the north side of the island would attract no special attention should she be seen, and we might even enter the passage with her and awaken no suspicion. The Britishers do not know that she is in our possession, and to the eyes of their lookouts she would be only the pilot boat. In this way we can obtain a view of the locality before night shuts down. After dark we can make such soundings and measurements as you think necessary, and even land on the island if you desire. Meanwhile the *Betty* can lie off the upper end of this side, where she cannot be seen, and await our return."

Lieutenant Jones reached out his hand and grasped that of his young subaltern.

"A good plan, Tom," he said, "and one we will carry out immediately. To complete the

deception, however, we will send the crew of this boat on board of the sloop, and put the same number of our own men in their places, dressed in their clothing. It will then take a close inspection indeed to learn our identity."

In a short time the desired changes had been made, and the pilot boat, in charge of her Yankee crew, sailed briskly off up the coast, leaving the *Laughing Betty* to follow at her leisure.

It was not quite dark when the former came in sight of the channel for which her occupants were searching, and a smile of satisfaction spread over Lieutenant Jones' face as he noted its width and course, and the configuration of the island shore almost directly opposite.

"If the pilot has rightly marked the depth of water in there, we shall be able to-morrow night before the moon rises to put the whole squadron in behind yonder point," he said to Midshipman Foster. "Then our men can land and in the early morning hours advance upon the forts which cannot be over a mile away."

"If you wish, sir, you may put me ashore as soon as it is dark, and I will try to pick out

the best route to the garrisons," volunteered his subaltern modestly. "I could do that while you were making your soundings through the channel."

"I appreciate the spirit which leads you to offer to take the more dangerous part of the work upon yourself, Midshipman Foster," the lieutenant replied heartily, "but we will not separate. A little later we will together make the soundings through the channel and into the opposite cove. Then leaving the vessel in charge of the boatswain, we will go ashore and pick out a way to the fortifications. For the present, however, you may run off shore, as though bound on a trip to the northward."

The junior officer, though a little surprised at the order, gave the necessary command to the helmsman, and immediately the tiny sloop was bounding over the waves in the direction the fleet had gone the night before.

"I have an object in this," Lieutenant Jones explained when his comrade had rejoined him. "I do this to protect the pilot. On the reappearance of the squadron with this boat in its

possession, the redcoats will think, if their lookouts are watching us, that she ran too far north, and unfortunately fell into our hands. Of course you are to return as soon as the island is hid by the falling darkness."

In less than a half-hour, therefore, she had turned about, and was hastening back to complete the work her officers had assigned themselves. Their northward run was retraced so accurately that they hit the very mouth of the channel, through which they slowly proceeded, taking soundings every few rods.

With open chart before him Lieutenant Jones gave out the courses, and checked off the soundings as they were announced, to find that they scarcely differed from those recorded by the old pilot.

"We can rely on every figure he has put on this paper," the lieutenant declared, as the boat emerged from the passage, "and I promise to bring the *Alfred* safely through there to-morrow night. Now we must see how far she can go into yonder cove. Fortunately it is low tide, and wherever we find sufficient water to float her

now, it will do to take her later. Make a straight course for the beach, and anchor as soon as you reach a depth of only ten feet."

"Six fathoms! Five and a half! Five! Four and three quarters! Four and a quarter! Four! Three!" called out the lineman in turn, and then Midshipman Foster went aft and reported:

"We still have eighteen feet of water under us, sir, and yet I am quite sure we are nearly in shore."

"Two fathoms!" came the cry from the bow at that instant, and Lieutenant Jones said:

"Very well, anchor where you are."

When the sails had been furled, and everything put in ship-shape for a few hours of waiting, he added:

"Get out the yawl, and see how far we are from the beach."

This was done, and in a few minutes Tom came alongside with the announcement:

"We are not over a cable's length away, sir, with a good landing almost anywhere."

"See if there is plenty of water around us," was the next command of the lieutenant, and

while his subaltern pushed away to carry it out, he entered his cabin and busied himself with some writing.

Fifteen or twenty minutes later the boat returned. As it touched the side of the sloop Lieutenant Jones folded up the papers he had written, and hurried to the deck.

"How do you find it?" he asked as he reached the gunwale.

"I have taken soundings for a hundred fathoms around, sir, and find all the water we need," answered the midshipman.

"Good!" ejaculated the senior officer. "That settles it. There is room in here for the whole fleet. Now for the other part of our work. Boatswain Gray," he continued, turning to a sailor near him, "you are to remain in charge here while Midshipman Foster and I are gone. We will send back the yawl after we land, and will whistle three times for it on our return. Under no other circumstances are you to go ashore. If at any time the Britishers discover you, and make an effort to capture you, you are to slip your cable, and, running back to the

Laughing Betty, deliver these papers to Lieutenant Fanning. He will know what to do with them."

"But that would leave you and Midshipman Foster in the hands of the redcoats," remonstrated the faithful fellow.

"Not necessarily," replied the lieutenant; "we might be in hiding in the woods, where we could remain until the squadron came. But whatever the consequences to us, these papers are not to fall into the enemy's hands. Remember that. Deliver them to Lieutenant Fanning if you can; sink them in the sea if you must. We will now go."

The last words were addressed to the midshipman, and with their utterance the speaker swung himself down into the waiting boat. The two sailors in it pulled away, and in two minutes reached the shore.

"Return to the sloop at once, but hold yourselves ready to come after us at any moment," directed Lieutenant Jones as he and his comrade leaped out.

"Aye! aye! sir," the men answered, and

pushing off they disappeared in the darkness, leaving the two officers alone upon the beach.

For a few minutes they stood there and listened, but no sounds reached them save the gentle ripple of the water at their feet, and the murmur of the light wind in the adjacent tree-tops.

"The beach is our only route for the present," the lieutenant finally remarked in a low tone, and leading the way up it; "but we may find open fields farther along."

Around the curving shore they slowly proceeded until they reached the western extremity of the cove in which they had landed. From here they could see the fires which, as on the previous night, had been kindled at the entrance to the harbor.

"They still fear a night attack," remarked Tom, as he and his comrade paused to watch the burning piles.

"Yes," he assented, "but as soon as the moon rises they will let the fires go out, and trust to the sharp eyes of their watchmen. I hope we may be able to locate their watch-tower."

"The forest seems to end just ahead there,"

went on the midshipman, "and I see no tree tall enough for that purpose. It must, I think, be nearer the forts."

"Doubtless," returned his companion; "we will go along to the end of the woods and take a survey from there."

Noiselessly they walked on until at the beginning of the cleared land. Stopping here they gazed ahead of them. It was too dark to discern clearly any objects a hundred yards away, but the fires on the arms of the harbor, and a light here and there in the town gave them a fair idea of the distance they would have to cover to reach the fortifications.

"Our forces could come as far as this unnoticed," the lieutenant said in a whisper; "and for an attack on the first fort might as well keep along the beach until they are at the point on which it stands. There they would doubtless strike a road leading to it. Whether the other force should leave the shore here I am not sure, however."

"We might cross the fields for a short distance," suggested Tom, putting his mouth close

to his comrade's ear, "and see if we do not find a road. If so, our first force could wait here until the second had time to reach the outskirts of the village. Then, with a sudden dash, both of the fortifications could be attacked at the same moment."

"I don't imagine the land side of either garrison is fortified," Lieutenant Jones commented in a voice which could not have been heard a dozen feet away; "and if we land and get as near them as this undiscovered, no guns can be turned on us before we reach them. But of course the nearer we get without being noticed the better our chances will be to capture them without a struggle. Let us go down the beach first. We can then take a road leading over this way, and see how near it comes to this place. If we meet any one we can pass ourselves off as sailors out for a stroll."

Quietly they proceeded, stopping occasionally to listen, but hearing no alarming sounds. In ten minutes they were as near to the eastern fort as they dared to go, lest they should be challenged by its sentinel. Through the gloom,

however, they could make out the general form of the fortifications sufficiently to confirm Lieutenant Jones' surmise. It was only a three-sided redoubt, its rear, or town side, being open and unprotected.

"Come," whispered the senior officer after a few moments, and they slipped noiselessly off towards the village. A few straggling houses lined the road, but they reached the street which faced the harbor without meeting any one.

Here, however, there were signs of life. Some of the shops were open and occasionally a person passed up or down the street. Trusting to their borrowed clothing to conceal their identity the two officers followed this thoroughfare far enough to the west to be certain that it led around to the second garrison, then they began to retrace their steps.

All went well until they were opposite an inn, or sailors' lodging-house. Then the outer door suddenly opened, and five or six half-drunken seamen staggered out. The light from the doorway fell full upon the passing strangers,

and catching sight of them one of their sailors called out:

"Hello there, my hearties! What ship do ye hail from?"

"Come in an' have a drink with us," cried a second. "It's Teddy Mulligan's treat. Ye are welcome to gin or ale."

"We can't come in just now," replied Lieutenant Jones, pausing a moment. "We are on an errand for the old man. Wait a few minutes until we return."

"No; ye don't," retorted Master Mulligan. "We'll make ye drink now. Grab 'em, lads, an' bring 'em in here."

As he spoke he made an attempt to seize the lieutenant. Out went the latter's fist, striking the drunken man between the eyes and knocking him over.

"Run, Tom, run for all you are worth," he said the next instant in a low tone to his comrade, and away the two Continentals sped up the street, followed by the infuriated gang.

CHAPTER X.

THE LEAD OF THE "ALFRED."

The shouts of the pursuers attracted the attention of the inmates of some of the other buildings, and they came out into the street to see what had caused the disturbance. Catching a glimpse of the fleeing men, and thinking them guilty of some crime, they joined in the pursuit with great zest. But for this circumstance the two officers would have easily made their escape.

What, however, the half-drunken sailors could not do, these new allies did—they steadily gained upon the fugitives.

Taking the first street to their left, which bore off towards the little cove where the pilot boat was awaiting them, the lieutenant and the midshipman ran at full speed, hoping their pursuers would before long give up the chase. It was

not until they were nearly out of the town that they discovered that the sailors had been re-enforced, and that the newer and fresher men were overhauling them.

"We must strike across the fields to the woods," Lieutenant Jones declared, glancing back over his shoulder. "We shall be overtaken if we keep the road."

"Come this way then," responded Tom, darting around the corner of a small house which stood close to the street. His comrade followed him, and, placing the building between them and their pursuers, they made a great spurt for the forest whose dark outline they could discern against the eastern sky.

This movement helped them and they were soon near enough to the trees to hear their swaying tops.

"We shall outstrip them yet," panted Lieutenant Jones. "Come nearer to me. We do not want to get separated in the forest, for if we do we shall never find each other again."

The midshipman complied with this request, and, side by side with his companion, sped on,

unconsciously drawing nearer and nearer to a huge tree, which stood a few rods out from the main woods. Even when they found themselves abreast of this they had no thought of danger until two men sprang out from behind it, and intercepted them.

Lieutenant Jones dodged under the arm of his tall assailant, and kept straight on to the woods under whose cover he was soon concealed. But Tom was not so fortunate. His antagonist caught hold of his shoulder, and hurled him to the ground; then he threw himself down upon him, crying out exultingly:

"I've got him! I've got him!"

"Hold on to him until we get there!" screamed a half-dozen of the townsmen who were now close at hand.

"Some of you come and help me find this other fellow," shouted the man who had followed the lieutenant to the edge of the woods.

Lying flat in the underbrush the officer heard these cries, and knew that any attempt on his part to rescue his unfortunate comrade would

only result in his own capture. So, reluctant as he was to do it, he decided that it was wiser to leave the midshipman to his fate.

"He won't be a prisoner over twenty-four hours if I escape," he thought, "and I can help him best by keeping quiet now."

For some minutes the search for the second fugitive was kept up, several of the new arrivals coming to the assistance of the man who had failed to catch him. They did not hesitate to enter the forest, and some of them passed near enough to the concealed officer for him to have reached out his hand and caught them by the legs, still he was not discovered. Finally all the searchers gathered about their single captive, who had been allowed to get upon his feet, and one of their number demanded:

"Who are you? And what were you running away for?"

"I'm only Tom Foster, and I ran away from some men who wanted to make me drink some rum," answered the prisoner in tones loud enough for his hiding comrade to hear. "And I won't drink it," he added in even louder and fiercer

tones. "I promised my mother before I went to sea that I wouldn't and I won't."

"I suppose your companion ran away because he didn't want to drink too," remarked one of the bystanders drily.

"Of course he did, he's a good boy like myself if he is bigger," retorted the captured lad.

"A remarkable circumstance," the man went on sarcastically. "Two teetotalers in one ship! Whoever heard of such a thing? We better take him back to town and let the governor look into this matter a little more carefully. He may be able to explain where the two lookouts over on the south shore went to last night."

"I'm ready to go back," Tom declared vociferously, for he was anxious, whatever happened to himself, to make the escape of Lieutenant Jones certain; "and you will find out it is just as I tell you."

"It may be all right, of course," the islander who was insisting on the lad's return to the village hastened to declare. "But it strikes me as a very peculiar thing for two men to be so afraid

of a little rum that they must run at the top of their speed for the nearest woods."

"Take him back to town with you, Master Gridley, and let the governor examine him. I warrant he will soon get at the truth," the man who had captured the boy now said. "Bacon and I will keep a sharp lookout for the other fellow. Perhaps after the moon rises we can find him."

"Those men who intercepted us are the look-outs, and this tree is the watch-tower. We stumbled right upon it," the young officer thought as he was led away.

A similar thought came also to Lieutenant Jones as he lay quietly in his place of concealment; and, as soon as he regarded it safe to do so, he crept softly along to the edge of the forest, and tried to obtain some idea of the location of the great tree, and its distance from the north shore.

"The best way will be to keep along the edge of the woods until I reach the beach," he finally concluded.

Still within the cover of the trees, on hands

and knees and inch by inch, he crawled along. At length, getting beyond the hearing of the men who were still at the lookout tree, he arose to his feet, and walked cautiously onward. In a few minutes he came out at the place where he and Midshipman Foster had stood when they obtained their first view of the lights of the village.

"Ah!" he ejaculated under his breath, as he took his old position, and looked off again towards the town, "we can send a squad of men up to that tree and capture the lookouts as soon as our ships enter the cove. Then there will be no danger of our movements being discovered until we are ready for our descent on the forts."

Turning about he walked rapidly down the shore until he knew he was opposite the waiting vessel. Here he gave three low but distinct whistles, and in response the yawl soon came in after him.

Simply saying to the sailors: "We were discovered and Midshipman Foster captured," he stepped into the boat, and gave the brief order: "Pull away."

In two minutes he was on board the tiny sloop, where in low tones he explained to the boatswain the mishap which had befallen his comrade. That officer, like himself, believed the captured lad would be released the soonest by bringing the whole fleet to his rescue, so the anchor of the pilot boat was hoisted, and, gliding through the channel to the outer sea, she took a course for the east end of the island. Before the moon arose she had rejoined the *Laughing Betty*, then both vessels started northward, and at dawn sighted the waiting squadron.

Sailing directly over to the *Alfred*, Lieutenant Jones boarded her, and notified Captain Saltonstall, who was on deck, that he was prepared to report the results of his cruise to the Commodore. For some reason, however, the commander of the fleet did not send for him until nine o'clock.

"I see you are back again, Lieutenant Jones," was his greeting as the subaltern entered his cabin and saluted.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what did you find on the south side of the island," he asked abruptly.

"Not a single harbor; not even a place for an anchorage; and no road through the woods," responded the lieutenant, going on to relate in detail the investigations he had made during the first night of his absence.

"Why did you not return with this report immediately?" inquired his commander sharply.

"The morning was already at hand when I reached the sloop," explained the officer, "and the relief of the captured lookouts were momentarily expected. I thought it wiser to keep out of their sight, and leave them in doubt as to the reason for their comrades' disappearance, so I ran over to the east end, where I found a secluded cove in which we concealed ourselves."

"And wasted a whole day which might have been used to form new plans," growled the Commodore.

"Not so, sir," replied Lieutenant Jones in great earnestness, "as you will yourself admit when I have completed my report. Before I

left that side of the island I captured a pilot boat and obtained from her captain an item of information which I regarded as of peculiar value. It was that on the north shore, and only a mile east of the harbor itself, there was a safe landing for our forces."

"Humph!" retorted Commodore Hopkins contemptuously, "I thought you had too good sense to be deceived by any story a renegade pilot might tell you." *

The subaltern flushed, but, with admirable self-control, responded respectfully:

"I trust I have, sir, unless I verify it, and that is what I did. In the cabin of the captured boat I found this chart of the whole north shore," and, taking the drawing from his pocket, he spread it out before his commander, pointing out the features which had especially impressed him when he had first examined it.

"Can it be relied upon?" questioned the

* This is not an imaginary conversation. Lieutenant Jones received this rebuke from his commander, and with the greatest difficulty persuaded him to allow the vessels to be taken through the channel.

Commodore in the pleasantest tones he had used during the interview.

"I have proved that it can," Master Jones answered, and giving a full account of his trip through the channel, and his experiences on the island during the previous night, including the unfortunate capture of Midshipman Foster.

"He won't tell them of your discovery, and our possible attack, will he?" queried the officer apprehensively.

"Have you seen anything in his conduct to lead you to believe he would?" asked the lieutenant indignantly.

"No," admitted the commander with some reluctance, "but it is well to consider that risk before we decide to make a landing."

"I am ready to stake my own life and the lives of my comrades on the certainty that he will not betray us," exclaimed the subaltern warmly.

"And is there anything else you are ready to do?" inquired his superior with a sneer.

"Yes, sir," returned Lieutenant Jones promptly. "I am ready to promise you that I will put the

whole fleet safely into that cove to-night before the moon rises, if you will permit me to do so."

"Well, well, you may leave the papers and I'll look them over. If your plan seems feasible, I may adopt it," Commodore Hopkins responded, and dismissed him.

"Is it possible he will neglect to make use of this opportunity?" soliloquized the senior lieutenant as he left the cabin and went off to his own quarters. "If I thought so I'd go from ship to ship and explain the situation to the captains. I am sure every one of them would favor the landing of our men this coming night."

He chafed under the uncertainty for a half-hour, and then sought Captain Saltonstall. In a casual way he approached the subject which was rankling in his heart, and, finding that the Captain was listening with unusual interest, he did not stop until he had given him a full account of his discovery and the possibilities which lay within it.

"You say you brought a chart of this channel

and its immediate surroundings to the Commodore, and explained to him its nearness to the forts?" asked his hearer when he had finished.

"Yes, sir."

"And what did he say?"

"That he would look the paper over, and possibly adopt the plan I recommended, if it seemed feasible," answered the lieutenant in evident chagrin.

"Can you make me a rough drawing of the channel, the adjacent shore, and the proposed routes to the forts?" inquired Captain Saltonstall abruptly.

"Yes, sir."

"Do so at once, please."

An hour later it was completed, and put with full explanations into the Captain's hands.

"Thank you," he said, and put it into his pocket.

In a few minutes he ordered out his gig and went the round of the frigates, making a brief call on each commander. Upon his return he remarked to his executive:

"We shall be prepared for the council which the Commodore is sure to call before the afternoon is over."

Nor was he mistaken. At four o'clock the signal was hoisted calling all the fleet captains to an interview. It lasted an hour, and then Lieutenant Jones was sent for. On his entrance he was asked, in case it was decided to attempt a landing, in what order he would take the ships through the channel.

"My plan is this," he replied without hesitation. "I will take the wheel of the *Alfred* in my own hands and lead the way. Her only light will be one over her stern to guide the vessel that follows her. The second frigate shall put out a light for the craft behind her, and so I'd arrange each in turn until the last one, which will need no light at all. I will also draft the course for each helmsman, and with that, and the light of the preceding ship before him, he ought to run the passage safely, for it is in no sense a difficult one. Once in the cove, where there is abundant room for the entire squadron, the landing of the men can take

place in any order and at any time our commander sees fit."

Pressed for further detail as to his own method of conducting the night attack, he said with a directness which showed he had thought the whole matter through:

"The first thing I should do after the vessels are safely anchored would be to send a small squad on shore to capture the lookouts at the watch-tower. In their place I would put two of our own men, and I would also station pickets at the point where the end of the forest touches the beach. It will then be impossible for us to be surprised, and we can disembark our men without fear of being disturbed.

"I should begin this work as soon as the moon rises—which will be about twelve o'clock to-night—and in three hours it ought to be accomplished. Then I would march the entire force along to the point where we had stationed our guards. There I would divide them, sending one party up to the watch-tower, where it would strike the road leading around the harbor to the farther fort, and the other down the

beach to the nearer garrison. If the upper squad moved at a double quick it would reach the western arm of the harbor about the same moment as the lower squad arrived at the eastern point. Then with a sudden dash the two companies could attack both fortifications at the same time."

"What hopes have we of crossing that half-mile of open fields without being discovered?" questioned Captain Hopkins of the *Cabot*.

"None," replied the lieutenant with a smile, "but I have every reason to believe we can pass over it before the enemy can make any effective rally against us."

"Would it not be well to have one or more of the frigates off the mouth of the harbor to prevent the escape of the shipping?" inquired Captain Biddle of the *Andrea Doria*.

"Not until after the attack on the forts is begun," was the decisive reply; "for as soon as the moon arose the vessels would be plainly visible to the sentinels at the forts, and put them in expectation of an immediate attack from us on sea, or on land, or both. We should,

however, have two of the frigates ready to follow up the land forces, and be off the bar by the time the garrisons are in our possession. That would effectually blockade the harbor."

"You are right and I was wrong," declared the commander of the *Andrea Doria* heartily.

At this point the senior lieutenant withdrew, but he had the pleasure of knowing within a very few minutes that the attack had been decided upon, and was to be conducted largely along the line of his own suggestions.

As the shades of night dropped down over the deep, the signal was run up for the advance to begin. In their usual order, that of the inverted V, the ships proceeded until within a half-mile of the outlying reef. Then they swung into a straight line, with the flag-ship at the head and Lieutenant Jones at her wheel.

If he felt any trepidation at the responsibility he had assumed he did not show it. As calmly as he had taken the tiny sloop through the channel the night before, he now followed the course laid down on the old pilot's chart. There was just wind enough, and that from the

north, to counteract the tide which was still flowing out, and to give steadiness to the crafts.

East a little, then straight south, then south-easterly, then east again, bobbed the stern light of the *Alfred*. With his eye fixed upon that the helmsman of the *Cabot* followed each one of her movements. The pilot of the third frigate kept close after his own guiding star; while the steersman of the fourth chased accurately the tiny gleam which danced on before him. The sloops and pilot boat, owing to their lighter draft, did not need to take so much caution, and sailed boldly in after their huge leaders.

No one made a mistake, and some minutes before the hour Lieutenant Jones had set, the whole fleet was safely anchored within the sheltered cove. The first great step in the night's undertaking had been successful.

CHAPTER XI.

A GENERAL STAMPEDE.

"MIDSHIPMAN LYMAN will report on deck for special duty," called out an orderly at the door of the mess-room, and with flushed cheeks the young officer sprang to his feet, hurriedly buckled on his sword, thrust his pistols into his belt, and ran up the companionway.

He was expecting this call. He had reasoned it out in this way:

"Since Lieutenant Jones is the only man acquainted with the locality, he will be put in command of the squad that is sent to capture the British lookouts. He will, moreover, be allowed to pick his men, and, now that Tom is in the enemy's hands, I am quite certain he will choose me as the under officer."

This line of reasoning had led him to hasten down to his quarters as soon as the ship was anchored, where he made sure not only that his

weapons were in order, but were in reach of his hand, should he be called. The orderly's announcement, therefore, found him ready for an immediate response.

As he emerged from the cabin he saw Commodore Hopkins, Captain Saltonstall, and Lieutenant Jones, standing near the wheel engaged in earnest conversation. Walking down to them, he saluted, saying:

"Here I am, sir."

It was the lieutenant who responded.

"You are prompt," he said, turning towards the lad, "but I will join you in another moment, in the yawl which is already lowered."

"Very well, sir," returned the subaltern, stepping along to the railing and swinging himself down into the boat.

He barely had time to note that there were eight men beside himself in the craft, when the lieutenant appeared, and gave the order to pull away.

No other word was spoken until the yawl touched the shore. Then her commander said in a low tone:

"Step out, lads."

The eight sailors obeyed promptly. Midshipman Lyman immediately followed, while Lieutenant Jones himself brought up the rear. Once on the beach the latter went on in the same low tone :

"Pick up the boat, lads, and set her beyond the reach of an incoming tide. We may be gone some time."

Instantly the stout tars, four on each side, raised the craft and carried her a rod or more up the shore, where they put her down noiselessly.

When this had been done the officer raised his hand saying : "Hist!"

All became as silent as death. For a moment they stood there listening, then the lieutenant gave three low whistles. Again there was silence, for no response came to the signal which had been given. After an interval of two or three minutes Lieutenant Jones repeated it, but still got no answer.

"That settles it," he at length said. "Midshipman Foster is in the hands of the British,

for had he escaped them he would have been waiting here for our coming. We will go on."

They were soon at the end of the forest, where the lights of the town and the fires on the arms of the harbor could be seen, and again stopped to listen. But all was as calm and peaceful as it had been at the same hour the previous night.

"That does not look as though the enemy have learned any alarming facts from their prisoner," commented the lieutenant after a moment's listening. "They are pursuing the same tactics to-night as they did last night—which shows that they are still looking only for an attack from the sea."

Stationing two of the sailors here to act as pickets, he, with the remainder of the squad following him in single file, started cautiously along the edge of the woods towards the great tree.

When within about a hundred feet of it he turned to his subaltern, who was walking just behind him, saying in a whisper:

"Wait here, while I go forward to reconnoiter. I do not believe the lookouts are here yet, but it is better to be careful."

The midshipman passed the word down the line, and the entire squad became motionless, while its leader disappeared in the darkness.

He moved so quietly no sound came to the ears of the waiting men until they heard a low, gentle voice, apparently from the neighborhood of the watch-tower, asking:

"Lieutenant Jones, is that you?"

"It's a woman!" exclaimed Sam under his breath. "What can it mean? Hands on your weapons, men, ready for instant use."

"Aye, aye, sir!" was the whispered response, and a slight rustle at their belts told that the command had been promptly obeyed.

Listening intently they heard the lieutenant, in great surprise, reply:

"Yes. Who are you? What do you want?"

"I have a message for you," the same low voice announced. Then all was quiet until the footsteps of their commander could be heard coming towards them.

"Lieutenant Jones, is that you?" "It's a woman!" exclaimed Sam under his breath. Page 200. *Two Yankee Middies.*

In another moment he had joined them, saying:

"This beats me. I was almost at the tree when a young girl standing beside it asked if it was I. For a moment I hesitated about acknowledging my identity, but finally concluded it was safe to do so, and asked who she was. Declaring she had a message for me, she stepped towards me, dropped this paper into my hand, and, before I could say another word, fled off towards the town."

"Shall I start a fire so you can read it?" the midshipman asked. "I have my pocket flint and steel with me."

"Yes," assented the lieutenant, "but let us step within the forest, where it cannot be seen by any one who happens to be looking this way."

"You are sure there are no lookouts up the tree?" one of the sailors ventured to ask.

"Had there been the girl would not have been there," his commander responded confidently.

Behind a thicket, and with the men huddled around to shut out the flickering flames, the lad

built a tiny fire of leaves. In the light of this Lieutenant Jones opened the bit of paper which had been handed him. It read:

LIEUTENANT JONES:—The lookouts will not be at the tree until after this is given to you. By lying in wait you can capture them. The way will then be clear for you, for the British are expecting only a night attack from the ships, and have posted no pickets between the great tree and the forts. Though not where I should like to be, I am thankful I am where I can still serve the cause. THOMAS FOSTER.

Passing the note over to his subaltern, after he had finished reading it, the lieutenant inquired:

"That is Tom's handwriting, is it not?"

Sam examined it carefully before he replied. Then he said:

"Yes, sir. It is written hastily, but Tom certainly wrote it. I should know his handwriting anywhere."

"And there is no one else on the island from whom we could expect such a message," continued the officer; "so we may accept it as

genuine, and act in accordance with its instructions. The first thing is to place ourselves in a position to seize the lookouts before they can give an alarm."

An examination of the surrounding field disclosed a small thicket a few rods west of the tree, or on the town side of it. Here two sailors were secreted with instructions to allow the expected redcoats to pass by them, and then they were to arise, and, unobserved, follow them up. Of the remaining men, two were sent a little way to the north, or beach side, of the watch-tower, where they concealed themselves in a hollow; while the other two went to the south and threw themselves flat on the ground, trusting to the darkness to hide their presence. Directly behind the huge trunk itself the two officers took their stand, and their leap out upon the unsuspecting lookouts was to be the signal for their comrades to close in.

It was nearly an hour after these arrangements were completed before the sound of footsteps far down the road announced that the watchmen were coming. Louder and louder the sound

grew. Nearer and nearer the men came, their slow, unconcerned movements, and the odor of the pipes they were smoking, revealing clearly that they had no suspicion of the trap which was already set for them.

Some time before they reached the thicket where the two sailors had been stationed their voices became audible.

"We are 'most there, Gilbert," one of them was saying, "and I wonder what is in store for us?"

"Nothing serious I reckon, Phil," his companion replied carelessly.

"I don't know about that," returned the first, "maybe some one will spirit us off as they did Jim and Phin night before last over on the other side of the island."

"But no one touched the men who were over there last night," retorted the second, significantly.

"It was the men over here who had the adventure last night," remarked the other; then he added with a chuckle, "and instead of being caught themselves they caught one of the other fellows."

"Pshaw! that fellow they caught is nothing but a boy," protested his comrade, "and he had no more to do with the disappearance of Jim and Phin than I did. He proved that he belonged to that Yankee schooner in the harbor, and was running away from a drunken gang. The governor let him go this morning. As for spirits—well, to my mind, the only spirit that had anything to do with Phin and Jim was the spirit within them."

"What do you mean by that?" questioned the one called Phil, stepping up to the great tree, which he had now reached, and knocking the ashes out of his pipe against its side.

"I mean," exclaimed Gilbert laconically, "that it was the spirit of cowardice that carried them off. They deserted so as not to be in the fight they were afraid was coming; and there's a lot of others in the forts who'd like to do——"

Here his words were choked off, for Lieutenant Jones had leaped from behind the tree and caught him by the throat. At the same instant the midshipman sprang upon the other man, and before either one of them could recover from the

surprise into which he was thrown by the unexpected attack, the six sailors were also upon them.

"Surrender, or I'll run you through," each officer cried in low, decisive tones, as he pressed the point of his sword against the breast of his opponent.

"When it comes to that, I give in every time," gasped the fellow in the lieutenant's grasp.

"And me too," the other soldier added quickly, ceasing to struggle.

It took but a moment more to disarm them, and then they were marched off towards the shore in the care of Midshipman Lyman and four sailors. Lieutenant Jones delayed long enough to give his final instructions to the two men who were to remain on guard there.

"You need not ascend the tree, lads," he said; "simply remain in the shadow of its trunk, and see that no one comes up the road to surprise us. Should a force of any size approach fall back to the other picket station, and send one of your number for reinforcements. But I hardly think you will have any occasion to do

that. When our own men come along your place will be with the party which is to attack the western garrison," and then he hurried away towards the other pickets.

Arriving there he gave the two sailors on that station nearly the same directions he had their comrades at the watch-tower, but assigned them to the company which was to assault the lower fort. This work finished he strode rapidly down the shore, hoping to overtake the squad with the captives by the time they reached the boat.

Meantime Sam was finding the prisoners in his charge very talkative.

"Are you the chap one of our men caught last night?" the taller of the two inquired, and bending forward in his effort to obtain a better view of his captor's face.

"No," the midshipman answered; but, hoping to obtain some tidings of Tom, he added: "Why do you ask?"

"Because you are about his size and build," was the reply. "I saw him this morning when he left the governor's house, and went down to the harbor."

"I heard you saying something like that as you approached the big tree," the young officer responded. "Tell me what you know about him."

"He's one of your fellows fast enough," interrupted the other prisoner with something like triumph in his tones; "and I always thought he was."

"It shows your good judgment," replied the lad with a slight laugh. "I don't mind telling you that he belongs to the same ship as myself, and that his companion last night whom your men did not capture is the lieutenant behind us."

"And they carried off Phin and Jim—our two fellows who were over on the other side of the island?" questioned the same soldier with the eagerness of one who wished to establish an opinion he had already maintained.

"You'll find them on shipboard," was Sam's reply.

"What'd I tell you, Gilbert," the man cried exultingly turning towards his fellow captive. "Who was right in this matter, you or I?"

"I give in," the other soldier said good-naturedly.

"But tell me of my friend," persisted the midshipman, addressing the redcoat by his side.

"I cannot tell you a great deal," the man declared. "But I know he was smart enough to pass himself off as one of the crew of a Salem vessel which came into the harbor for repairs a few days before the appearance of your fleet, and which has not been allowed to sail. What became of him after that I do not know."

At this moment they arrived at the yawl, and were almost immediately joined by Lieutenant Jones. While the two officers looked out for the prisoners, the sailors launched the boat, then all embarked, and went off to the flag-ship. When the captives had been placed in the brig, Sam, who had had charge of this work, returned to the deck where he found the senior lieutenant. Relating the facts about Tom which he had learned from the Britishers, the lad asked:

"If Tom is free, why do you suppose he sent that girl to you with the message instead of join-

ing us himself? I should think he would want to have a part in the capture of the forts."

Lieutenant Jones, recalling the last sentence of that message, replied:

"Doubtless that is his preference, and if he has not returned to do so, we may be sure it is because he believes he can do us a greater service by remaining where he is."

"I don't see how that can be," soliloquized Sam as he went down to his quarters for a brief rest before the next call to duty. "I don't see how he can help us by remaining among the British. I don't see why he did not come and tell us what he is up to anyway. I don't see why he sent that girl. Who was she, anyway, and how did he know he could trust her?"

The more he puzzled over these questions, the more perplexing they grew. He was still trying to solve them, when an order was given for the landing of the sailors to begin.

It had been decided at the council of the fleet captains and their commander that three hundred men would be sufficient for the land force and these were drawn from the four

frigates in equal number. As the moon arose, the small boats were lowered, and the disembarkation commenced. It proved an easy matter, and long before three o'clock the seamen were on the beach, where they formed into two companies of one hundred and fifty each—one under the command of Lieutenant Jones, and the other in charge of Lieutenant Arnold of the *Columbus*.

The advance was delayed, however, long enough for two of the ships—the *Cabot* and the *Andrea Doria*—to pass through the channel to the outer sea, where they were to lay to until the rush for the garrisons began; then they were to sail for the mouth of the harbor and put it under blockade. The capture of the lookouts had rendered this movement possible, for while the sea just without the passage would have been, after the rising of the moon, visible from the top of the tree-tower, it was too far east to be seen by the sentinels on the ramparts of the fortifications.

At length the frigates were in place, and the last step in that night's undertaking was ready to be taken.

"Forward!" was the command of the senior officer at the head of the two columns, and forward the men rapidly moved. Reaching the first picket station, a halt was made, and a survey of the forts taken. In the early dawn they lay quiet, and apparently unconscious of the presence of the force which, within a few minutes, was to fall upon them.

Passing down the lines Lieutenant Jones said cheerily:

"The enemy do not expect us, lads. Get ready for a good stiff run. We are going to part here, and those of you who go with me will have to take two steps for every one the other division takes. Can you do it?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the low but earnest response.

To Lieutenant Arnold he then remarked:

"I shall now wheel to the left and go up to the big tree. Advance far enough with your men to watch us, and when I swing my sword high in the air, you will know the rush is to begin. Bear in mind that we have nearly twice your distance to go, and regulate your

pace so as to reach the lower end of yonder point about the time we strike the foot of the opposite one."

"I'll do my best, sir," was the officer's hearty reply.

Returning to the head of his own men the senior lieutenant gave the order:

"Quick step, lads! Left wheel! Forward!" and up across the field to the watch-tower they went on the run.

Whirling around this, they only waited for the flash of their leader's sword in the morning light, and then began their rush. Down the path, into the nearest street, and on towards the upper harbor, they went at a double quick. The tread of their feet shook the houses they passed, and awoke the sleepers, but by the time the half aroused inmates peered out to see what made the commotion they were nearly out of sight down the thoroughfare.

Before they arrived at the center of the town, however, some one had decided who the rushing men were, and sent up the cry:

"The Yankees are here! The Yankees are here!"

The cry was taken up, and reverberated off over the still waters of the bay to the garrisons. These were already in commotion, for their sentinels had just seen and reported that two frigates were approaching the harbor from the east. An alarm had been sounded, and the awakened officers and men were running to their stations. But their thoughts were with the coming vessels, and not until the cry arose from the village were they aware that there was an attacking force in their rear.

The discovery demoralized them, and there was a general stampede. Out from the redoubts they fled, hoping to escape to the town or to the woods beyond before they could be hemmed in. On the eastern point they were not successful, however. Lieutenant Arnold and his men cut off their retreat, and swept the fleeing men back into their garrison, where they surrendered without a blow.

But on the opposite point, a large portion of the runaways by keeping over to the western

beach, eluded Lieutenant Jones and his company, who for the time let them go. Gathering in the stragglers only, they kept on to the redoubt to find a British captain pacing back and forth across its entrance, the sole defender of the place.

He smiled grimly as the Continentals rushed down upon him, and, extending his sword, hilt foremost, towards Lieutenant Jones, said:

"I surrender to you, sir, all I have—my sword, the fort and its guns—as for men, I have none."

"I accept the garrison and its contents, sir," the lieutenant replied; "but the sword I return to you. You deserve it for remaining at your post."

The British flag had already been run down at the opposite fort, and the Continental banner displayed in its place. In another minute a similar change of bunting had been made at the western fortification, and without the shedding of a drop of blood both redoubts were in possession of the Colonists.

A messenger was immediately despatched to

Commodore Hopkins, announcing this fact, and by the time the flag-ship and her consorts were in the bay, an inventory of the contents of the two forts had been made out. It was found that eighty cannon, a few small arms, and a scanty supply of powder, were all they contained. The sharp eyes of Lieutenant Jones, however, detected unmistakable evidences that large quantities of goods and ammunition had recently been removed from the store-houses and magazines, and he added this fact to his report. The old captain was sent on board the *Alfred* and sharply questioned.

"I have surrendered you everything in my possession," was his unvarying answer.

"Send a force up to the town, and arrest the governor, and bring him here," was the Commodore's next order.

This was promptly done, and in an hour that official stood before the commander of the fleet. But to all interrogation about the missing stores he returned one and the same answer:

"You are welcome to everything you can find, sir!"

"Perhaps a few days of confinement may render you a trifle more communicative," was the comment of the exasperated Commodore, and he ordered the prisoner to be taken down to the hold where he was to have the same fare as the other captives.

About the same moment Midshipman Lyman, who was with Lieutenant Jones in the western fort, approached that officer, asking: "May I take a small force, sir, and look up Midshipman Foster?"

"I hardly think that is necessary," replied the lieutenant with a smile, "for there he comes now."

Sam whirled about to behold his long absent chum hastening up the road towards the redoubt.

CHAPTER XII.

A BOLD RESOLVE.

To understand the appearance of the young midshipman at this time we must go back to the moment when he was delivered over to Master Gridley and the townspeople, by the lookout who had captured him, and follow him in his movements which were as thrilling as they were unexpected.

He was immediately led away towards the village, and as he journeyed along two thoughts were prominent in his mind. The first had to do with Lieutenant Jones' escape. "He will be able to reach the pilot boat, and carry the tidings of his discovery to the fleet," he soliloquized. "That means that within twenty-four hours our men will be here, and my release will speedily follow. I need not worry therefore over the possibility of a long imprisonment."

This matter disposed, of he turned his attention to a second and a more pressing thought: "How can I keep the British officials from suspecting my connection with the squadron?" That Master Gridley—whoever he might be—did entertain such a suspicion there could be no doubt. His sarcastic replies at the watch-tower, and his anxiety to have the prisoner taken before the governor of the island, clearly established that fact. This suspicion must be allayed, and a credible reason for his presence in the town, and for the incident of the evening, must be given. Tom recognized the difficulty of the task, but set his wits to work to accomplish it.

That the drunken sailors, whom they would doubtless meet on their return, would confirm his statement, that he had run away to avoid drinking their proffered rum, he firmly believed. But what if he was asked the name of his ship, and to tell the errand which had brought him on shore? How could he evade this direct questioning, and yet awaken no mistrust about himself? If he only knew the

names of some of the vessels in the harbor, he would venture to select one, and declare he belonged to her, trusting to the promptness and positiveness of his statement, to prevent further investigation. But he did not know the name of a single one. To guess at a name, and not hit upon a right one, would show clearly that he was trying to conceal something. But could he not refuse to give the name of his vessel on the ground that he was deserting her, and did not propose to be sent back to her? Would not such a declaration on his part, throw additional light on two other things also? Would it not explain why he did not give the name of his companion; and why they had been so ready to refuse the rum of the other sailors, and to keep out of their clutches? The more he thought of it, this seemed the only reasonable excuse he could give for withholding the name of his ship, if questioned about her, and on this course he had practically decided, when the main street of the town was reached.

At this corner a party of sailors headed by Teddy Mulligan was waiting, and as they saw

the approaching squad they began to call out lustily:

"Did ye get 'em? Did ye get 'em, lads?"

"One of them," some one in the returning throng answered.

"I hope 'tis the spalpeen who knocked me down," cried Master Mulligan striding forward; "if so I'll split open his head."

He pushed his way throught he group until he came face to face with the prisoner. Looking him over as well as he could in the darkness, he continued in evident disappointment:

"Ho! it's only the little shaver. He did me no harm, but I'll take him back to the tavern an' make him drink my health," and he put out his hand to take the captive by the shoulder.

Master Gridley pushed him away.

"Let him alone," he remarked quietly. "He's in my charge, and I'll take care of him."

"Ah, who are you?" demanded the baffled sailor with a fearful oath.

"I am Cæsar Gridley, the governor's secretary," the man replied as quietly as before.

The announcement, brief as it was, had an in-

stantaneous effect upon the drunken men. Their boisterousness ceased, while their leader, doffing his cap, said apologetically :

"I begs pardon, sir. I meant no offense. Only 'tis Teddy Mulligan's birthday, sir, and he was a treatin' every sailor in town. This here kid an' the fellow with him insulted me by refusin' my rum. That's why we were chasin' 'em."

"Do you know what ship he belongs to?" questioned Master Gridley, evidently still reluctant to give up the opinion he had already formed about his prisoner.

"I think to that Yankee craft in the harbor, sir," Teddy replied promptly; while one of his companions added:

"That's it, sir. I've seen him on board of her."

Like a flash Tom saw his opportunity, and quickly remarked, with well-feigned chagrin :

"What's the use of denying it now, sir?"

"Then you had no business on shore at this hour," retorted the secretary, "and I'll take you to the governor just the same."

He proceeded along the main thoroughfare a short distance, then turned into a wide avenue leading to the south. Along this he proceeded for some distance, and then stopped before the most imposing edifice the lad had yet seen.

As they were about to ascend the steps to the veranda the door opened, and a tall, dignified gentleman, accompanied by three women in evening attire, came out. One of the latter was of middle age, while the other two were only young girls.

"Good evening, your Excellency," exclaimed the secretary, and, removing his hat as soon as he caught sight of the ladies, he added: "and good evening, madam and mesdemoiselles."

"Ah! Is it you, Master Gridley?" responded the governor looking down at the secretary and his companion. "What do you wish?"

"I was not aware, sir, that you were going out to-night, and came around here with this prisoner," and he rapidly explained how the lad had been captured, adding:

"My first thought was that he was a spy

from the American squadron, but the sailors who were chasing him say he belongs on board Captain Hatch's schooner, and he affirms it. Knowing in that case he had no business to be on shore at this hour I concluded to keep on here with him to ask what I should do with him: Send him to the bridewell, or let him go?"

"We'll see in a moment, Master Gridley," answered the official. "Come here, Mistress Hatch. Do you know this fellow, and is he one of your father's crew?"

While the secretary was speaking Tom glanced at the two girls. They were both very pretty, but offered a striking contrast to each other. The nearer one was tall and stately, with a hauteur which was unmistakably born of pride. She gazed for a moment down at the two men that barred the passage, and then turned disdainfully away, making an uncomplimentary remark to the elderly woman, whom she addressed as mother, about persons who did not know better than trouble her father with business at so unseemly an hour.

The other maid was scarcely of medium height, and as plump as she was fair. Her brown eyes, moreover, told of a depth of character which was wholly wanting in the other; while both courage and faithfulness were stamped upon her face. She impressed even a casual observer as one who would be loyal to any cause she espoused, and who would die rather than betray a trust.

Coming through the doorway a little later than the others, her attention had been arrested by the words which fell from Master Gridley's lips, and as he concluded she looked straight at the captive lad. The young officer was sure he had never seen her before, yet as her eyes met his, she started as though she recognized him, and was startled by her discovery. She had, however, fully recovered control of herself when the governor called her by name, and stepped along carelessly towards the front of the stoop as though to obtain a better view of the lad before she gave her decision.

In that brief moment Tom's heart sank within him. Of course she would deny that he

belonged to her father's vessel, and the suspicions he had hoped to allay respecting his identity would be aroused in full force. He could not help dropping his head in sheer disappointment that his nicely laid plan had so quickly failed, but the next instant he received the greatest surprise of his life.

"Of course I know him, sir," the young girl declared with a positiveness which carried with it the conviction that she was telling the truth. "He is Tom Foster. How came you to leave the ship, Tom? Did father say you could?"

If she played her part well, the young midshipman was fully her equal as an actor. Still holding down his head he replied sheepishly:

"I didn't ask him. I slipped away in the yawl."

"What for?" asked the official sternly.

"I wanted to see the sights," confessed the lad in abashed tones.

Here the wife of the governor spoke to him in a low and impatient voice which led that officer to turn to his secretary, saying:

"I can give no more time to this matter now,

Master Gridley. Take the prisoner around to the jail for the night. I will question him further in the morning," and he and the ladies descending the steps went off up the street.

"Come on," the secretary said, as they disappeared, and he led his captive back to the main street. At its corner he turned to the right, and proceeded for a few rods, where he stopped before a building constructed of the native coral, and knocked loudly. In a few minutes an old man came shuffling along to the door, and asked querulously, before he opened it, who was there.

"The governor's secretary with a prisoner," Master Gridley replied impatiently.

Hastily the door was unbarred and thrown open. Delivering the captive to the jailer with just enough explanation for him to understand that he was to guard the lad carefully until he was called for the following day, Master Gridley departed.

The jailer barred the door again, and then led the young officer up a rude stairway to the second floor. Throwing open the nearest door he said tersely :

"Go in!"

The lad obeyed, and the door was closed and fastened upon him. He had, however, caught a glimpse of his cell under the flicker of the candle the old man carried, and knew there was a bed in one corner. Groping his way over to this, he threw himself upon it, but not to sleep. His brain was busy with the questions: "Who is this Miss Hatch? How came she to know me? Does she know I belong to the squadron?"

The only answer he could give was to the first question, and that came from the conversation which had taken place between the governor and the secretary. Evidently she was the daughter of the captain of the Yankee schooner in the harbor. The other questions he must drop for the present, but it was clear that the young girl favored the Continental cause, and was ready to help him conceal his identity from the British. He felt grateful to her for this help, and hoped he might yet have the opportunity to tell her so, and with this thought in mind he fell asleep to dream that she came to him and offered to lead the Continental forces from the

secluded cove to the forts—an offer he was glad to accept.

It was dark in the cell when he awoke, but through the cracks in the rough shutter which covered his grated window the light of the coming day gleamed. He arose and went over to it. A brief examination showed him that he could reach through the iron bars and unhook the shutter and push it open, in this way giving himself both light and air. He promptly did so, and gazed off towards the great tree where he had been captured. How sweet the fresh air seemed! How glorious the day was to be! Could he see the ocean from his window? He stepped along to its south edge, and was delighted to find he could look over the tops of the low houses on the opposite side of the street, and catch a glimpse of the sea just at that point where the forest touched the beach. To-morrow morning before this hour, the men who had been landed from the frigates would come around that edge of the woods—and he could see them and hear them if he could not join them. He would be up early and watch their movements,

unless the governor dismissed him. If released, he would during the coming night make his way to the cove, and be in waiting there, when the sailors landed.

He had got thus far in his reverie when some hard object struck one of the iron bars in front of him with a force that made it sing. He glanced down, and beheld a small negro boy just beneath his window. Noticing that he had attracted the prisoner's attention the youngster held up a bit of coral around which a piece of paper was tied. He then made a motion that he was going to throw it through the grating. Tom understood him, and, nodding assent, stepped back out of the way. The next instant the stone, deftly thrown, came between the lower bar and the sill and landed on the cell floor. Picking it up the young officer looked out. The negro had disappeared.

Quickly untying the scrap the midshipman read these words in a neat and legible hand :

MASTER THOMAS FOSTER:—

When brought before the governor to-day remember these three things: First, that you belong to the

schooner *Amos Bradford*, bound from Jamaica to Salem, which has put in here for repairs. Secondly, that her captain is Charles J. Hatch. Thirdly, that your companion last night, who escaped, was Master Elijah Simsbury. My father knows about this and has already put your name on the list of his crew. Master Simsbury will, if necessary, testify that he was ashore last night—as he really was. So stick to these statements and the governor cannot discover who you really are. We are glad to help you and the cause.

RUTH HATCH.

"God bless you, Ruth, for planning for my safety while I slept," he ejaculated fervently when he had perused the note. "If I don't go free this morning with such a helper as you I deserve to rot within these walls. And it may be I shall see you—talk with you—learn how you came to know me—and have an opportunity to thank you for your kindness. You will find me grateful."

Then he did a strange thing for so sensible a fellow. He kissed the bit of paper, and stowed it carefully away in the pocket of his waistcoat.

He ate the breakfast which the old jailer

brought him an hour later, with an appetite which proved he was not worrying over his fate; and when at nine o'clock an orderly appeared at the door of his cell, telling him he was now wanted at the governor's residence, he announced his readiness to go with so cheery a smile, one would have thought he was going to a picnic, rather than to face an official who held the power of life and death in his hand.

He was taken to a large room in one wing of the gubernatorial mansion, which was fitted up as an office. Behind a large table sat the governor, intently perusing a paper before him, while at a smaller table at his right, Master Gridley was sitting busily engaged in writing. The guard conducted the lad up in front of the larger table, where he stood for some time unnoticed by either official. Then the governor looked up, scowled, and asked peremptorily:

"What's your name?"

"Tom Foster."

"What ship do you belong to?"

"The *Amos Bradford.*"

"Who is her master?"

"Charles J. Hatch."

"You came ashore last night without any permission from him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did any other sailor come ashore?"

"Yes, sir; Elijah Simsbury."

"Where is he now?"

"I do not know unless he has returned to the schooner."

"How dared you break my order to your captain that neither he nor any of his crew were to come on shore between sunset and sunrise?"

"I ought not to have done it, sir," admitted the prisoner very humbly. His reply appeared to mollify the great man, for he remarked somewhat kindly:

"I gave that order for the safety of your crew. I desired to prevent any altercation between them and the British sailors who might happen to be on shore. You see for yourself how near you came to getting into trouble."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, let this be a lesson to you. I find you

have told me the truth, and Mistress Ruth Hatch assures me you are not an unruly fellow, I set you free this time. It may not turn out as well for you if you are found on shore at night again. You may go."

"Thank you, sir," the lad replied and hastened from the room.

Once out upon the street he stopped a moment uncertain what to do. Then deciding that he better go on board the Yankee schooner for the day at least he walked slowly off towards the harbor. Before reaching the water he heard his name called by some one behind him, and turned around to behold the young girl who had befriended him, and a gentleman who proved to be her father. They joined him, and the Captain asked in a loud tone as though he had always known him :

"Got enough of the jail, Tom ?"

"Yes, sir," he answered, and understanding the impression the officer wished to make on any chance listeners, he added : "You don't catch me in such a scrape again."

"I should hope not," Captain Hatch re-

sponded. "Well, our boat is down here. Come along and we'll go on board the schooner."

He followed them as one of the crew might have done, and they led him down to a yawl which was drawn up on the shore, and in charge of a stout sailor.

"Push off the boat, lads," the Captain commanded brusquely. "Tumble in all," he added when the craft was afloat. "Tom, you may take the bow oar. Ruth, sit here by me. Pull away, my hearties."

When some distance out in the bay the officer gave the lad on the bow seat a comical look, saying in a low tone:

"Thomas Foster, that is Elijah Simbury sitting in front of you. I thought it was time you knew each other."

The sailor glanced over his shoulder, and nodded at Tom knowingly, while the Captain went on:

"We were both on shore to testify in your favor if necessary."

"I am very grateful to both of you, sir, and to Mistress Ruth, for all you have done for me,"

replied the lad, and he gave the young girl a look which sent the warm blood to her fair cheeks.

"Tut, tut," answered the skipper; "it isn't worth speaking of."

There was silence until the vessel was reached and they had mounted to her deck. Then leading the way to the stern, where a huge sail had been stretched for an awning, Captain Hatch motioned his guest to one chair, took another himself, drew his daughter close to his side, and, looking affectionately up into her face, remarked:

"I suppose, Midshipman Foster, that Ruth was the prime mover in this affair. If she hadn't recognized you I should hardly have interested myself in your behalf."

"That is what puzzled me, Mistress Ruth," the young officer declared. "I do not know that I ever saw you before last night, and yet you knew me and called me by name."

Again the color mounted to the young maid's cheeks, but she frankly explained the mystery.

"When you and your friends, Masters Lyman and Fanning, came into Salem on the *Polly*, she

anchored close to our vessel. I saw you all, and Captain Lewis afterwards told me your names, and that you were all on your way to Philadelphia to join the navy. He said so many nice things about you all, that your faces were fixed in my mind, and I recognized you last evening, as soon as I saw you. Master Gridley's words showed me that you were trying to pass yourself off as one of our crew. I understood your purpose and did what I could to help it along."

"Which was very nice of you," Tom said gallantly. "But how did you get word to your father so that he could fix up things for me?"

The girl glanced at her parent, and both laughed.

"Tell him, if you wish," the Captain said.

"I am held by the governor every night as a hostage," she explained. "He reasons that father will not attempt to sail away at night if I am on shore."

"And there's where he's right," broke in the skipper, caressing his daughter's hand, which was thrown over one of his stalwart shoulders. "You see, she's all I've got now her

mother is in heaven, and I don't mean to have her far from me."

"That's just it," continued Ruth. "He won't have me far from him, and so, though the governor doesn't know it, he sleeps on shore every night, and is near enough to me for me to call him should I need his help. We communicate with each other by a string from my window. I let down notes to him, and draw up his answers. In that way I told him of you, and lowered to him the note you received this morning. He hired that negro boy to throw it in to you."

"It is plain enough now how you were able to work in my favor," the midshipman remarked, "but back of what you did there was a motive. It was your love for our beloved cause, and I shall tell our commander of your patriotism."

"Bless you, lad, wait until we have done something worth telling of," Captain Hatch responded. "Wait until I get home, and then I shall offer my services to the naval committee."

"They'll be glad to take you, sir," Tom

affirmed confidently, and then he told of his trips with Lieutenant Jones, and of the latter's discovery of the safe channel for the fleet only a mile away.

"To-morrow morning before this time," he concluded, "both garrisons will be ours."

"I'm glad to hear it. That means that I can soon resume my voyage," said the Captain, rising and going forward to attend to some matter which needed his personal oversight.

Before sunset, at which hour Mistress Ruth had to return to the shore, the young officer and she had become the best of friends. It was nearly time for her to go, and they were standing alone near the starboard railing, where they had a good view of the western fort and its surroundings. Suddenly she made an announcement which changed his entire plans for the coming night.

"I meant to have told you before now, Master Foster," she said, "that the governor is hiding the greater portion of his stores and ammunition so your commander cannot find them should he capture the garrisons."

"Where is he putting them?" quickly questioned Tom.

"No one knows but himself and the men who are doing the work," she responded. "They have two large floats and for two days have been loading them during the day, and taking them away during the night. The last loads will go this evening, and the men who carry them away will remain at the place to which they are taken until your squadron has departed. That makes the governor the only one on the island who knows where the stores are, and he would die before he disclosed their whereabouts. I've overheard him and Master Gridley talking about it."

"Then I shall go with those last loads," the midshipman declared. "Where are the floats?"

She pointed out the spot on the western shore, below the fort, where the lading was taking place, and then said approvingly:

"I knew you would do it, for it is what I would do if I were in your place. May the dear Lord bring you back in safety."

"He will because you will pray for me," replied the lad reverently.

"Can I serve you in any other way?" she asked.

He thought a moment, and then explaining how sure he was that Lieutenant Jones would visit the great tree to capture the lookouts he added:

"I wish I could get a note to him."

"Write it, and I will see that he has it," she promised.

"How?"

"That is my secret. But I have a safe messenger."

He had no thought that she meant herself, and when she left the schooner she carried the note she afterwards put into the hands of the senior lieutenant.

About the same hour Tom was put on to the western shore, near the redoubt, whence he proceeded over to the place where the loaded floats were lying, intending to conceal himself upon one of them, and go with it to its destination.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MISSING STORES.

The young officer had no definite plan of procedure in mind as he crossed over to the western shore. He only knew that somewhere along there he would find the great floats. After they were found he could decide on a way to board one of them.

Soon he reached the beach, and at a point, as he quickly discovered, a short distance below, the vessels for which he was searching. Cautiously he advanced until he was abreast of them.

They showed up quite plainly even in the darkness—two huge flatboats, piled high with goods, and furnished with temporary masts and sails. They were also lying, as he had anticipated, some distance out from the shore, for there was no pier on that side.

"I shall have to swim for it," he muttered. "Even if there were a yawl I should not dare use it."

He hesitated a moment, and then went on with his soliloquy:

"Perhaps I had better go some rods up the beach before I take to the water. I can then float noiselessly down to the nearest craft, and crawl on board."

Suiting the action to the word he continued to the north a rod or two where he came upon a boat drawn up on the shore. He stopped and examined it. It was not fastened, and the oars were drawn in across the gunwales. The discovery caused him to look sharply about him, but he saw no one.

"They cannot be far away," he said to himself; "perhaps up at the fort, and will return soon. That is what the floats are waiting for. I must get off to them at once or I shall be left behind."

He proceeded along the beach until out of sight of the yawl, and then rapidly disrobed himself. Tying his garments into a bundle with

a string he took from one of the pockets, he then bound the package upon his head.

Entering the water as soon as these preparations were completed, he waded out until beyond his depth, and then began to swim, keeping his head as erect as possible.

When as far off the shore as the floats, he turned to the south, and went slowly and silently down towards them. Soon he came to two skiffs which the nearer vessel had in tow.

"She's well supplied with tenders," he thought, "but I presume has them to load and unload her cargo."

Crawling up into one of these crafts he took hold of its painter, and pulled himself up under the stern of the flatboat. There he raised his head until nearly even with her deck and listened.

Two men, not far away, were talking.

"I don't see what keeps the Captain," one of them was saying. "It's time he was here; we ought to get off before the tide turns."

"He was going up to the governor's for his final orders," the other man replied, "and has

probably been delayed. It cannot be long, however, before he will be here."

"We shall have an easy time on that cay," the first remarked after a moment of silence. "Plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and nothing to do. They may keep us there a month, John, for all of me."

"I reckon the most of us feel about the same way," the second declared. "But it was cute of the governor to send the goods over there. I wonder what the commander of that squadron will think when he finds they are gone?"

"He may think what he pleases," responded the other. "To find them will be another thing."

"Evidently there is no chance for me to get on board at this end," Tom commented under his breath, and, leaving go of the rope, he dropped over the side of the boat into the water. Swimming along the starboard side of the vessel he quickly reached her bow, and caught hold of the anchor cable to swing himself on board.

"Hello! what's the matter forward?" a voice

exclaimed, and there was the sound of footsteps down the deck.

In an instant the lad sank back into the sea, and drew himself under the projecting bow of the float.

Whoever it was that came to examine the hawser, he evidently decided there was no one around, for he soon went leisurely back to his station.

"Those fellows are thicker than peas in a pod!" the young midshipman soliloquized. "It is evident I cannot get on board this craft without being discovered. Better luck farther along I hope," and he swam over towards the other flatboat.

Reaching her after-boats, he found there were three. Taking hold of the gunwale of the one nearest her stern he rested himself.

"Three tenders here," he mused, "and two at the other float, with a third on shore. That looks as though this one had her full complement, and will sail as she is. What's the matter with my taking possession of one of these crafts, and going over to her destination in that

way? I'll be less likely to be discovered, and will get there about as soon as she will."

The idea pleased him, and he took another look at all three of the tenders. Finding the outer one was a good-sized yawl, with deep sides, and movable seats, he remarked in an undertone: "This is the place for me," and promptly crawled into the boat.

Once there he slowly dressed himself. Then he took out the bow thwart, and curled down into the smallest space possible.

"I won't be seen here as long as it is dark," he said complacently, "and possibly we may reach our destination before the moon rises."

Lying there he heard the coming of the captain of the rear float, and his passage out to his vessel. Then some one on the bow of that craft called out to the one in whose tender he was:

"We are ready! You can make sail any time!"

"Aye! aye!" was the reply, and then the creaking of ropes and the flapping of sails told

that both the flatboats were getting under weigh.

"Good! we are off," Tom declared to himself a moment later as he felt the yawl move. Then he added facetiously:

"Go right along, old girl! I'm coming too."

A few minutes later he raised his head, and looked behind him. The lights of the town told him that the floats were taking a south-western course, and with a sigh of satisfaction he straightened his limbs out under the middle thwart, saying:

"I may as well make myself comfortable until we reach the cay those men on the other float were talking about."

There was just swaying motion enough to the yawl to serve as a rocker, and in a few minutes he went to sleep. For two hours or more he must have kept up the slumber, as it was not later than nine when the floats started, and, on awaking, he learned it was nearly midnight from the conversation he overheard.

A man at the stern of the leading craft shouted back to the other one:

"We are nearly to the reef. Shall we lay to until the moon rises before we go through it?"

"How long shall we have to wait?" the look-out on the rear vessel inquired.

"Not over a half-hour," was the answer.

"We'll wait then," was the decision.

The lad sat up and looked about him. He could make out quite clearly the float ahead of him, and see, though more dimly, the one that was following. While he gazed first at one, and then at the other, they came around into the wind, and lay almost motionless on the water.

The yawl he was in swung around with the vessel, and soon stretched out behind her towards the adjacent reef. Peering through the darkness Tom could make out a passageway through the barrier almost directly opposite where he was.

"I had better get out of this before the moon comes up," he concluded; "but how? Shall I swim, or go in the boat?"

He thought over the situation a moment, and then pushed the yawl back towards the next

skiff. Reaching it he swung it around so that his own painter came over across its gunwales. Then he deliberately cut the rope, frayed out its end, and caught it in one of the row-locks of the intervening craft. To all appearances it had during the voyage caught there itself, and, chafing off, set the yawl free.

This done he allowed himself to drift off towards the channel with the ingoing tide. At length he was far enough away from the flat-boat to venture to put out an oar. Dropping it softly over the stern, he gently sculled on through the open passage into the lagoon. There he put out two oars, and rowed boldly on towards the cay which he knew could not be far away. It proved, however, a longer distance than he had expected, but he finally touched the beach, and leaped out.

Simply drawing the yawl up a little way to prevent its floating off while he was gone, he ran up towards some trees whose tops he could faintly discern. Almost immediately he came upon a hastily constructed camp under a grove of palm trees, and the huge piles of boxes and

bales scattered around told him this was the place the governor of New Providence had chosen for the island stores.

"Now to find some cove where I can hide the yawl until I get a better view of these surroundings by moonlight," he thought, and hurried back to the shore. Leaping into the boat, he took up the oars, and began to pull to the south, for he was on the northeast end of the isle. He kept close to the beach and did not go five hundred yards before he reached its lower end. No cove of any kind had yet appeared, and so he rowed on, coming to the western side in a few minutes.

"It's nothing but a cay, and a small one at that," he now muttered, "and the only way I can keep out of sight of those other fellows is to find a clump of trees between here and their camp. They are not likely to come over here before daylight, and by that time I'll be off on my long pull back to the forts."

"Gracious!" he ejaculated the next instant, and rested on his oars. "Those floats took a southwest course when they started, but what

if they changed it while I was asleep? I never thought of it before, but even a slight change in the direction taken would make quite a difference in a distance of eight or ten miles, and though the crafts were slow they must have come that far. I don't know but I'm in a fix, I declare."

He whistled softly as he resumed his rowing up the west shore. He was so close to the beach a thicket of any size could not escape his eyes, especially as it was growing lighter every moment. Soon he saw a clump of small trees, near the water, which he believed would answer for a place of concealment, and he pulled in towards it.

As the yawl touched the strand he jumped out, and turned to draw up the craft. But no sooner was his back towards the trees than a man stepped softly out from behind them, and, running noiselessly down the beach, caught hold of his arms, one in either hand, and held them with a grip he could not throw off. As he did so he called out tauntingly:

"Who are you, my little night-hawk, visiting

our camp, and circumnavigating our island, as though you expected to take possession of it and its contents?"

The midshipman thought quickly. Here was another blunder on his part. He ought to have known the British camp would not be left without a guard. But the redcoat must have set down his gun under the trees. The fact that he was using both hands to hold him proved this. Could he not by ruse accomplish what he could not do by sheer strength: Free himself and obtain possession of that musket? He resolved to try.

"Let go of me," he exclaimed in apparent anger. "What a fool you are! Cannot you see the yawl belongs to the great float? Don't you know that they are both lying off the channel waiting for the moon to rise before they enter the lagoon? I'm Tom Foster, the fellow who has come over here to take an account of the stores. I wanted to get an idea of how large the cay was, so I took the yawl and rowed around here while the vessels were waiting. Let go of me, or it will be the worse for you."

His audacity won. The man dropped his hold instantly, saying in an apologetic tone:

"I beg your pardon, Master Foster, but how was I to know who you were? You acted like a spy trying to find out what you could about us. I only wanted to do my duty. I hope you won't lay that up against me."

"Of course not," Tom replied with a hearty laugh. "What a joke on me! Well, get your gun, and go around to the camp with me."

"All right, sir," the soldier responded and hastening up to the trees.

He returned in a moment with the weapon, and handing it to the lad, said:

"You take it, sir, while I row you around the cay. I'm used to the oars."

"Thank you," the midshipman answered, delighted that his ruse had succeeded.

He was soon seated in the stern of the boat with the musket lying across his knees. Then the redcoat pushed off the craft, and, leaping into it, took up the oars.

"Which way shall I pull, sir?" he questioned.

"Out towards the west reef," directed Tom.

"I want to see if there is a passage through it on this side."

"There is," the man affirmed. "I saw it yesterday from the shore. It must be nearly opposite us."

"Then we'll go out through it, and round the island in that way," the young officer responded carelessly.

If the soldier thought he had got more of a task than he had counted on, he nevertheless set himself resolutely to the accomplishment of it. Under his vigorous strokes the yawl shot across the lagoon, and was quickly at the reef. The opening—a narrow one—proved to be a few rods above them, but, running up to it, the stout fellow sent the boat through it at good speed.

"There you are, sir," he exclaimed as they emerged into the open sea.

The face of the moon here peeped above the horizon, and glancing back at the isle the midshipman realized that his only hope of getting away unobserved by the occupants of the floats was to keep the cay between himself and them

until out of their range of vision. So he said abruptly:

"You have done so well, my good fellow, you may pull straight on until out of sight of the island."

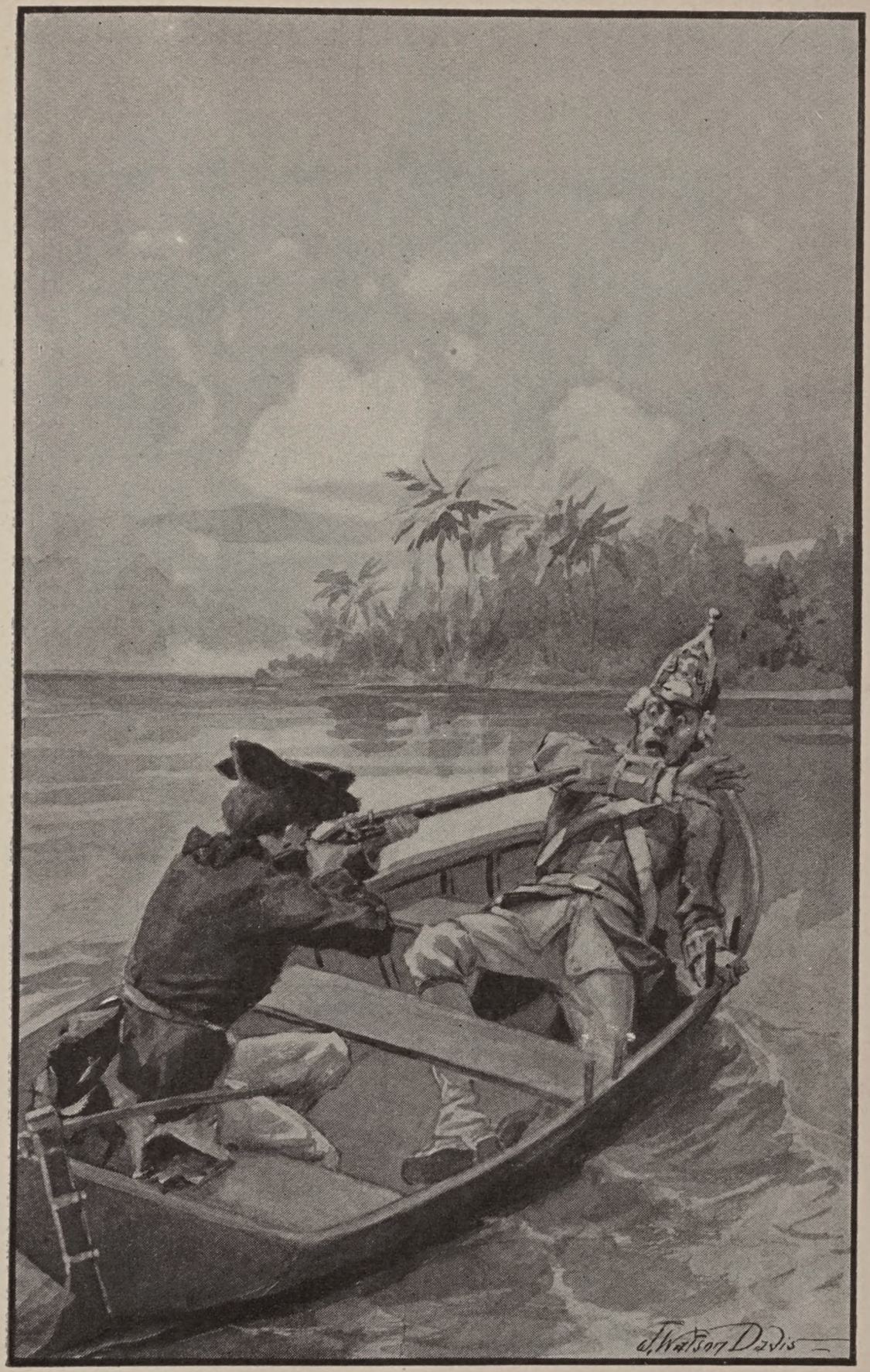
"What is that for, sir?" the man asked, resting on his oars, and staring at his companion in amazement.

Lifting the musket and bringing it to bear on the fellow, Tom replied coolly:

"It means that I am a Continental officer, and came over here to see where your men were putting those goods. Keep quiet and do as I say, and the worst thing that will happen to you will be a long pull at the oars. Otherwise I shall, greatly to my regret, be forced to send a ball through you."

The soldier was no coward, but as he looked into the eyes of the speaker who was gazing at him steadily he knew he had met one who would do exactly what he said, and he reluctantly yielded, saying sullenly:

"It'll be a terrible pull back to the forts, if there's where you are going."



Lifting the musket and pointing it at the fellow, Tom replied: "I am a Continental officer." Page 256.

Two Yankee Middies.

"How far?" asked his captor.

"A good twelve miles," he answered.

"And the course is straight northeast?"

"Nearly so."

"How large a force have you on the cay?"

"There'll be twenty-five when the men on the floats have landed."

"Are there any other islands or cays between here and New Providence?"

"Not in a direct line, but there are two or three little ones to the north of the course which can be seen in the daytime."

"Well, pull away to the west until I tell you to stop."

The man obeyed, and rowed rapidly for perhaps thirty minutes.

"You can't see much of it now," he announced; "leastwise they can't see you."

"Turn the boat directly about," Tom commanded without taking his eyes off of the oarsman.

The fellow did so, smiling grimly.

"You are a good one," he said; "you don't mean to be caught by turning your head."

The young officer made no reply to this comment, but as soon as his own face was due east, called out:

"There, hold her!"

The cay looked like a dark spot on a shining surface, and the lad was confident the soldier was right: he could not be seen.

"Take a course to the north now," he directed, "and row leisurely. I do not want you to tire yourself needlessly."

"Thank you," the Britisher responded in some surprise; and with a long, steady pull he sent the yawl in the direction named.

In another half-hour the midshipman ordered the course changed to the east. This enabled him to see the isle again without turning his head but slightly. There it was a mere speck at the southeast, and, keeping parallel with it until beyond it, he then directed the yawl to be headed straight for New Providence.

For an hour they kept on, Tom allowing his oarsman to rest occasionally, and then some islets appeared almost directly across their path.

"There are your cays," the young officer remarked, and nodding towards them.

The soldier glanced over his shoulder.

"Yes," he assented, "and we have worked too far north. You will want to take a course directly east from there."

"Very well," answered the midshipman, "we'll keep just to the south of them, and, after they have been passed by, you can take them for a guide. Hold them straight behind you till you have lost sight of them."

"And soon after that you will see New Providence," the prisoner answered.

This proved to be true, and when the sun came up out of the deep the gem of the Bahamas was not over three miles away.

"Our ships are in the harbor, and those banners floating above the forts must therefore belong to us," Tom exclaimed joyfully a few minntes later.

The redcoat turned and gazed for some time at the town and the fortifications.

"You are right," he finally said with marked concern, "and I suppose that means that in

another hour I shall be in the hold of one of those crafts."

"Not at all," responded the lad warmly. "I want you to land me on the shore a mile south of the village where no one will be likely to see us, and the moment your feet touch the beach you may take to the woods or go where you please."

"Heaven bless you," said the man. "I have a wife and six children in the village, and I was afraid I should never see them again."

He resumed his rowing with new vigor, and in about a half-hour they reached the land. Together they lifted the boat out of the water, and carried her up beyond the flow of the tide. Then they shook hands, the soldier saying with some emotion:

"You are a gentleman, every inch of you, Master Foster, and Isaac Waters will never forget you;" then he slipped into the nearby forest.

Tom kept up the beach to the west arm of the harbor. Then he crossed over to the road leading to the garrison, towards which he immediately hastened. He was discovered by Lieu-

tenant Jones before he reached its entrance, as already related, and that officer, accompanied by Midshipman Lyman, went out to meet him. But before they could extend the warm greetings they had for him, he saluted his superior, saying:

"I have an important report to make, sir. I have found the missing stores."

CHAPTER XIV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

Lieutenant Jones did not appear surprised at this announcement of Midshipman Foster. Instead he put out his hand and grasped that of his subaltern, saying:

"When I found the store-houses were empty, I expected this. Come this way and I will hear your report."

He started to enter the redoubt, but noticing the wishful look on Sam's face he stopped to add: "You may come, too, Midshipman Lyman."

Then he led the way across the parade to the right wing of the fortification. Here he threw open a door with the explanation:

"I have taken temporary possession of the post-commander's office."

Here they seated themselves and Tom asked:

"Shall I give you a full account of my experiences since we separated, or only that portion which has to do with the finding of the hidden stores?"

"Wait a moment," the lieutenant responded. "Do the Britishers know of your discovery, and will they be likely to remove the goods to some other hiding-place while we delay?"

"They haven't the slightest idea that I know where the stores have been taken, and we shall find them right where they are now if we do not go after them in a week," was the lad's reply.

"Then I will hear your full story," the senior officer said.

Beginning at the moment when he had been led away as a captive the young officer told of the unexpected happenings which had set him free, and how he had learned that the governor was removing the stores from the island. When he reached the point where he gave his letter for the lieutenant to Mistress Ruth Hatch to be delivered, he paused to inquire:

"Did you get it, Lieutenant Jones?"

"Yes," his superior assented. "The young lady brought it to me herself."

"I never once thought she meant herself, when she said she had a safe messenger," Tom declared in tones of admiration. "There are not many like her."

"It is evident you think so," the lieutenant returned.

"I don't care," answered the midshipman stoutly. "You will say so when you see her. She is as fair as she is brave."

Lieutenant Jones shook his head, and glancing over towards Sam, declared solemnly:

"It's a bad case, Midshipman Lyman. But I do not see that we can do anything. We shall have to let him go on."

A blush mantled Tom's cheek as he said: "Go on with my report, I presume you mean," and then he related how he found the flatboats, concealed himself in the yawl, and reached the cay undiscovered. His adventures there with Master Isaac Waters, and how he had made the soldier row the boat over the long course back

to New Providence, followed, much to the amusement of his hearers.

"That is all," he concluded, "except I allowed my prisoner his liberty."

"He had earned it," the lieutenant commented drily. Then he continued:

"You have had nothing to eat since last night, Tom?"

"No, sir."

"Well, you will find a boat waiting just outside of the fort. Tell the men to row you over to the *Laughing Betty*, and then to return here for me. By the time you have obtained your breakfast and changed your clothing I will join you. We will then go over to the *Alfred* and see the Commodore."

"Thank you, sir," the midshipman replied, rising to carry out the order.

He found the boat on the east beach, and was carried swiftly out to the sloop, where Lieutenant Fanning gave him a warm welcome, and listened almost breathlessly to the story which Tom told for the second time. He then got breakfast, and dressed himself

for the interview with the commander of the squadron.

He was barely ready, when Lieutenant Jones arrived bringing a paper in his hand.

"I stopped at the pilot boat as I came along," he explained, "and looked over that roll of charts again. Here is one which I am confident has upon it the cays you speak of. See if it is not so."

The subaltern took the chart and unrolled it. It covered that portion of the sea known as the "Tongue of the Ocean" which lies between New Providence and the Andros islands. All reefs, islets, and cays were designated, and he had no difficulty in picking out the one on which were the missing stores. He found it was called Bird's Eye Cay.

"Here it is," he remarked to the lieutenant, pointing it out.

"Go down into the cabin, get a quill and trace out the route by which you went to it, and also the one by which you returned," that officer directed. "Then with the chart in your pocket go over and make your report to Com-

modore Hopkins. After thinking the matter over I have decided that it is better for you to go alone, and you need not mention you have made any report to me."

The look Tom gave him led him to add with a marked emphasis on his words:

"It may be a good thing for the commander to have a report occasionally from some one besides Lieutenant Jones."

The midshipman bowed and replied:

"Very well, sir. I will go at once."

He descended to the cabin, traced out the routes on the map as his superior had suggested, and then returned to the deck. The yawl of the *Laughing Betty* was already lowered, and entering it, he gave the order to pull for the flag-ship, while the lieutenant went back to his boat and returned to the fort.

Lieutenant Seabury was in charge of the deck when the lad arrived at the *Alfred*, and hastened to congratulate him on his escape. He asked no questions about the affair, however, and to Tom's request to see the Commodore, replied:

"I will send word to him at once."

In five minutes the midshipman was shown in to the commander's cabin, where that officer sat alone.

"So you have escaped, Midshipman Foster," he remarked as the subaltern came in, and there was an inflection in his voice, as though he desired to know the reason for the interview.

"Yes, sir," the young officer replied, "and I have come to report that I have discovered the whereabouts of the missing stores."

Commodore Hopkins leaped to his feet with the exclamation :

"Are you sure of this, my lad?"

"Perfectly sure, sir," Tom responded confidently. "Let me first point out to you on this map where they have been taken, and then I will tell you how I came to know of it."

As he spoke he drew the chart he carried from the pocket of his coat and spread it out upon the cabin table. Eagerly his commander bent over the paper and listened to the subaltern's explanation.

"The goods are on this cay," he said, placing his finger on the isle, "about twelve miles from

here. This line marks the course the floats took when I went over with them, and this is the route by which I returned in the small boat."

"You have been there, then?" questioned the Commodore, raising his head and looking with some show of astonishment at the lad.

"I have, sir," the midshipman replied modestly. "Shall I tell you about it?"

"Yes, everything," Commodore Hopkins declared; "tell me how you came to know of the governor's plan, how you joined those floats, as you call them, and the incidents of your voyage."

With as little detail as possible Tom told his story, giving Captain Hatch and his daughter full credit for their share in his deliverance, and the information they had given him, and passing lightly over his own part in visiting the cay.

When he had done the Commodore said:

"It is an important service you have rendered us, Midshipman Foster, but hardly one I should have assigned to so young an officer. Yet no one could have done better, and since you have doubtless formed an opinion about

the best way to recover those stores, I would ask you what it is?"

"I should make the men who took them over there bring them back," the lad responded promptly.

"It would be pretty near the right thing, I declare," assented his commander with a broad smile, "and to send the governor himself over to superintend the work. But how about the lagoon; can one of our frigates enter there?"

"I do not think so," was the answer. "The water is too shallow; that is why the governor used the floats. But the *Laughing Betty* could get through the channel and near enough inshore to cover the camp with her cannon, while a few more men added to her crew would make a force sufficient to take possession of the cay. There are but twenty-five men there."

"Return to the sloop, and send Lieutenant Fanning over here at once," was the Commodore's abrupt command.

In ten minutes the commander of the *Laughing Betty* was closeted with Commodore Hopkins, where he remained for a half-hour. When

he returned to his own vessel, it was to give an immediate order for her anchor to be hoisted, and for her to be taken over to the west fort, where there was a rude pier. She was laid alongside of this, and five cannon were brought out from the garrison and added to her armament. After these were in place a good supply of ammunition was put on board, and then she sailed over to the flag-ship. Coming under her starboard quarter, a force of twenty-five men under the command of Midshipman Lyman was transferred to her, and the governor of the island received as a passenger.

As soon as these arrangements were completed she threw off her grapplings, and under full sail started out of the harbor. When the bar was crossed, her head was turned to the southwest, and with a good breeze from the northward to help her on she sped away for Bird's Eye Cay.

The governor, when brought up from the hold of the *Alfred*, and ordered on board the sloop, promptly obeyed, but it was with a mystified air as though he was wondering what

the movement meant. When the *Laughing Betty* started out of the harbor, he seemed to grow more puzzled, and glanced about him as though he wanted to question some one about her trip. His eye fell upon Tom, who was at that moment coming towards him, and apparently recognizing him, he exclaimed:

"Are you not the Master Foster, who was brought before me yesterday morning?"

"I cannot deny my identity," the midshipman replied, secretly amused at the turn of affairs which had made the official a prisoner.

"But I thought you then said you belonged to Captain Hatch's schooner?" the great man went on sternly.

"I did, since the captain was good enough to add my name to his crew that morning before I was arraigned before you," explained the lad with a smile.

"Added your name that morning," repeated the governor, "where had he seen you?"

"He had not seen me," the young officer confessed. "I never met him or saw his vessel until after you set me free."

"But you had met his daughter, Mistress Ruth," persisted the Britisher as though it was beginning to dawn upon him how he had been outwitted.

"No, sir; I saw her for the first time on your veranda," Tom answered, realizing that his reply would perplex the official more than ever.

"How then did she know you? Why did she speak as though you belonged on board her father's vessel? The little vixen, I believe she knew all the while that you were a spy, and planned to help you," cried the governor indignantly.

"You will have to ask her," responded the young officer. "I never betray my friends."

There was a moment of silence, and then the prisoner asked abruptly:

"Where are we going."

"You will soon learn," the midshipman said evasively, and turning to give the orders which would put the head of the sloop to the southwest.

The moment this course was taken the governor seemed to suspect the destination of

the vessel, for as soon as Midshipman Foster was again at liberty, he remarked:

"You are bound for Bird's Eye Cay."

"What a Yankee you are!" was the response.

"Me! A Yankee!" almost shouted the official in his wrath. "What do you mean, sir?"

"That you have made a good guess," Tom replied with a laugh.

"Oh!" ejaculated the governor, somewhat mollified. Then he inquired:

"Who told you the stores were over there? I did not suppose there was a person remaining on the island who knew but myself."

"I do not think there was," the young officer admitted. "Your men were true to you. We found out in another way."

"What are you taking me over there for?" was the next query.

"I shall have to refer you to Lieutenant Fanning," was Tom's answer as he walked forward.

In half the time it took the heavy floats to make the trip the sloop ran over the course, and, feeling her way through the channel into the

broad lagoon, she anchored so that her broadside commanded the British camp.

A casual glance showed that the men sojourning at the isle had been taking things easily. The cargo of one of the floats which came over the previous night was untouched, while that of the other was only partially unloaded. Nor had there been as yet any effort to pile the stores up systematically, for they were strewed everywhere from the water line to the clump of palm trees, under which the camp was pitched.

The arrival of the sloop had, moreover, been taken as a signal for what work was going on to cease, and the toilers on the float, and on the shore, were standing in groups, evidently discussing her unexpected appearance. As she had no flag flying from her mast her real character did not seem to dawn upon the watching men, while the sudden discovery of the governor on her deck led quickly to the conclusion that he was in command of the vessel, and for some reason had thought it necessary to come over to the cay.

"Alive there, lads, go on with your work," shouted the commander of the camp, as soon as that decision was reached, and, as his men resumed their task with surprising zeal, he himself jumped into a boat and pulled out to the *Betty*.

He was allowed to mount her deck, and, touching his cap, he addressed the island official:

"Glad to see you, sir. Hope nothing is wrong, sir. We will straighten out things as fast as possible, sir. Will you come on shore, sir?"

"I have nothing to do with this craft," replied the governor curtly. "There is her commander," and he pointed to Lieutenant Fanning, who stood near him.

That officer, with a broad smile on his face as though he enjoyed the situation hugely, said:

"This is the Continental sloop *Laughing Betty*, six guns, and fifty men. Will you surrender at once, or shall I open fire on your camp?"

The surprised Britisher looked towards the governor, but that official had turned his back upon him as though indifferent to the whole affair. Forced, therefore, to act for himself, he stammered:

"What are the terms?"

"That you and your men take the stores back to New Providence. Then all of you shall have your freedom," was the immediate announcement.

Again the man looked at the governor, but he was staring straight off towards the reef.

"How long may I have to consult with my men?" he questioned.

"Fifteen minutes."

"I will give you an answer in that time," he responded, and, returning to his boat, rowed hastily back to the shore.

Before the specified time had elapsed he swung a white flag in token of his surrender, and the two midshipmen with a force of thirty men were sent to take charge of the cay.

In a short time Midshipman Foster returned announcing:

"We have disarmed the enemy, taken possession of the camp and floats, and the men are ready to go to work."

On receiving this report Lieutenant Fanning turned to the governor, saying:

"You are to go on shore, now, sir, and superintend the reloading of the barges."

"And suppose I refuse?" the official responded haughtily.

"Then we shall force you to do it at the point of the bayonet," was the decisive reply.

The Britisher bit his lip in his wrath, but entered the yawl which, in charge of Midshipman Foster, took him over to the isle. Midshipman Lyman had already distributed his men so as to guard both the land and boat forces, and, on the arrival of the governor, the transfer of the stores began. The Continentals made no other attempt than to see that the work was properly and expeditiously done, and the island official, finding that he had the task to execute, proceeded to superintend his men with a skill which was truly commendable. By night the partially unloaded float had so nearly received

her full cargo, that an hour of toil in the early morning completed it. Then, leaving Midshipman Lyman with his twenty-five men in charge of the isle, the *Laughing Betty* began the convoy of the flatboats back to New Providence.

Against the almost head wind the heavy barges made slow progress, yet before noon they had rounded the northwestern extremity of the island and entered the harbor. Though absent less than twenty-four hours, they found that the crews of the other vessels had not been idle while they were gone. The work of dismantling the forts had begun. Two brigs, having no cargoes, and which were lying in the harbor, had been seized, and were being put in readiness to receive the stores as fast as they were brought into the bay. New bulwarks were also in the process of construction on these, and on the *Hiram Holmes*, that they might be fitted to carry an armament of six guns each. The frigates, too, were undergoing extensive alterations that they might receive the additional cannon, and have magazines large enough to hold the ammunition still in the garrisons,

and which was brought back from Bird's Eye Cay.

"We are to have an easy time of it until the floats are ready to go back for their next loads, Tom," Lieutenant Fanning announced when he returned to the sloop after visiting the Commodore. "The men in the fortifications are to furnish guards for the governor and his gang while we are in port, and we have only to sit still and see our comrades work."

"Probably our commander thinks the bringing back of the stores is our part," the lad answered. Then with a slight blush he continued: "It is a good time for me to visit the *Amos Bradford*."

His friend laughed.

"Go over any time this afternoon you wish to," he good-naturedly replied.

About two o'clock, therefore, the young officer ordered out his yawl, and was rowed over to the schooner. Before he reached her, he saw Mistress Ruth standing alone by the starboard rail watching his coming. He took this as an indication that his visit would be to her only—a

circumstance which for some reason was very pleasing to him. Waving his hand in token that he saw her, he spoke to his men who increased their speed. In another minute he was alongside of the vessel, and, ascending to her deck, he quickly grasped the fair girl's hand.

"I am glad to see you again," he said.

"I expected you this afternoon," she replied.

"I found the missing stores," he continued somewhat proudly.

"I knew you would," she answered with no less pride.

"Let me tell you about it," he went on.

"Nay, let me tell the story," she responded. going on rapidly to tell the incidents of his undertaking with surprising accuracy.

"How did you know it?" he asked, interrupting her.

"Lieutenant Jones told me," she explained. "He came over here yesterday afternoon to thank father and me for assisting you. He then gave us a full account of your adventures, and said many pleasant things about you. He thinks highly of you."

"I wish some one else did," he exclaimed impulsively.

"Who?" she asked innocently. "Do you mean father? If so, I can assure you that his opinion of you is as great as that of the lieutenant."

"I value his good opinion," admitted the young officer, "but the person I was thinking of is nearer by."

"Oh! you must mean Elijah Simsbury, I guess. He's in the forecastle," she remarked demurely, but there was a mischievous twinkle in her eyes which suggested that she was not so dull of comprehension as she appeared to be.

"I have two bits of news for you," she went on with haste as though to prevent him from resuming their present topic of conversation. "Father has decided to wait until the fleet sails so as to have a convoy home; and Commodore Hopkins has invited us to dine with him at six this afternoon."

"I am glad to hear both of those things," he answered with heartiness; "the first for my sake, since I shall see you occasionally; and the

latter for your sake, since the commander must mean it to be an appreciation of your services."

"I am glad for another reason," she acknowledged frankly.

"What is that?" he inquired with interest because it interested her.

"You are to be invited to dinner also," she announced, "and that shows the Commodore appreciates what you have done. Father says midshipmen are not often invited to dine with commodores."

"Hardly," he responded, and almost believing she had been misinformed. But on his return to the *Betty* an hour later he found the Commodore's invitation awaiting him.

The dinner proved to be more of an affair, however, than the lad had anticipated, for when he, at the appointed hour, went over to the *Alfred*, he learned that all of the captains and executive officers of the squadron had been invited to meet the Salem captain and his daughter in recognition of the services they had rendered the fleet. But he was so inseparably connected with all that they had done, that the

honor extended to them reflected largely upon himself. Nor was Captain Hatch the man to allow it to pass unnoticed that the freeing of the young midshipman, and the giving him the information about the purpose of the governor, would have amounted to little had he not possessed the ability and the courage to follow the enemy to the distant cay.

"I am proud that we—myself and daughter—were able to assist so promising an officer," he concluded.

Much as the lad prized this commendation, however, and others which he received that night, he valued more a quick look which the fair maid at the opposite end of the table gave him while her father was speaking. It was but for an instant yet it told him as truly as though she had put her thoughts into words that he and the encomiums heaped upon him were not a matter of indifference to her.

Owing to the delay in placing the stores on board the brigs a week passed before the final loads were brought over from Bird's Eye Cay. Another week elapsed before the new bulwarks

of the *Laughing Betty* had been constructed, and the alterations on the other vessels completed. But at length there came a beautiful March morning, when all was in readiness for the departure of the squadron, but the release of the prisoners. For it had been decided that, with the exception of the governor of the island and the commanders of the two garrisons,* all should be liberated. Quickly the incarcerated men were sent on shore, then all sails were hoisted, and the nine vessels—including the four frigates, the two sloops, the two brigs, and Captain Hatch's schooner—crossed the bar and headed northward—homeward bound.

* There is a difference of opinion about the number of prisoners Commodore Hopkins brought away from New Providence. I follow the best authorities.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "GLASGOW."

As soon as the squadron was well out to sea it assumed the form of a Greek cross. The *Alfred* led the upright line, and was followed by one of the brigs. Then came the *Amos Bradford*, and behind her the other brig, while the *Cabot* brought up the rear. The transverse was formed by the *Laughing Betty* and the *Andrea Doria* taking a position to the right of Captain Hatch's schooner, while the *Hiram Holmes* and the *Columbus* sailed on her left. This arrangement brought the unarmed vessels at the center of the fleet, and placed a frigate at each of the four ends of the crux.

For several days good progress was made, and then the squadron found itself becalmed. A week passed with hardly breeze enough to waft a feather across a ship's deck. Then came four days of light and variant winds, during

which the fleet did not make over one hundred miles.

But the morning of April first dawned gray and threatening. All day long the clouds thickened, and the wind, shifting into the northeast, increased. After a while it became difficult for the vessels to keep together, and a signal was displayed at the mast of the *Alfred*, directing all to report at New London in case they became separated. When the night shut down the rain was pouring in torrents, and the *Laughing Betty* was alone on the face of the deep.

She had held to her course as long as possible, but when the *Amos Bradford*, which alone remained in sight, turned and under bare poles ran off before the storm, she followed her example and also scud away to the southwest. The larger vessel outran her, however, and, with the coming of darkness, had disappeared.

For forty-eight hours the tempest raged, then the rain ceased, and the wind whipped around into the northwest, but still blew with unabated force.

The course of the sloop was changed, and, under reefed jib and mainsail, she tried to work her way back to the north. She made some progress, but was carried so far out to sea, that, on the morning of April sixth, when the wind moderated, she found herself a hundred miles to the southeast of Block Island.

Towards this she was headed, while a sharp lookout was kept for the other vessels of the scattered fleet. At noon a schooner was sighted far off towards the west.

"I think it is the *Amos Bradford*," Midshipman Foster announced. "Shall we run over towards her?"

"Yes," Lieutenant Fanning assented with a smile. "We may at least speak her, and ascertain if all has gone well with them."

In a half-hour they decided she was not Captain Hatch's vessel; and sending down into the cabin for a glass Lieutenant Fanning scanned her closely.

"She is flying the British flag," he exclaimed the next instant. "Clear away the guns. Pipe all hands to their stations."

In a moment all was excitement on board. The prospect of capturing a prize, and taking it into port unaided, filled the whole crew with enthusiasm. Every sailor sprang eagerly to his place; every man was ready to do his duty.

Rapidly the vessels approached each other, until there was less than two miles between them. Then the British captain discovered the character of the sloop and sheered off.

He was too heavily laden to beat up against the wind, and so, crowding on all sail, stood away to the southeast. The *Laughing Betty* gave chase, and, though well loaded herself, and unable to spread as much canvas as the schooner, yet she slowly overhauled her.

In two hours she was near enough to send a ball from her bow gun under the stern of her prey—a hint she treated with contempt; and it was not until the next shot carried away her maintopmast that she hove to.

Midshipman Foster and ten men were sent over to her. The extreme youth of the officer led the grizzly-haired captain to exclaim, as he mounted to the deck:

"This is an outrage! Is my vessel to be stopped on the high seas by a parcel of boys?"

"I am Midshipman Foster of the Continental sloop of war the *Laughing Betty*," replied the lad with dignity, "and whether I am young or old, I shall be obliged to demand your papers."

With considerable bluster the angry skipper produced them showing that his schooner was the *Lady Mary*, bound from Barbados to Quebec with an assorted cargo.

"I shall have to relieve you of your command, sir," Tom remarked politely, when he had examined the documents.

The old captain made no answer, but the young officer, on the ground that silence was virtually consent, called six of his men to the deck, and put them in charge of the vessel. Then he turned to the skipper again, saying:

"I must now request you and your mates to enter my boat, and accompany me over to the sloop."

Sullenly they obeyed, and in a few minutes

were put on board the *Betty*, where the midshipman made his report to her commander.

"You have done well," Lieutenant Fanning said, "and I will have you take the prize into port. Choose six more men to accompany you back to her, as that will make your force none too large should any emergency arise. Place the schooner's crew in confinement for additional safety, and see if you can repair the broken topmast. I will stand by you until you are ready to sail."

"Thank you, sir," the subaltern replied. Then selecting his additional men he had the four sailors, who were still in the yawl, row him and them back to the *Lady Mary*.

Ordering her crew into the forecastle, he partially covered the hatch, and stationed an armed guard beside it. Then he turned his attention to the broken spar. A new topmast was found in the hold, and, hoisting it out, he as rapidly as possible pushed forward the work of putting it into place. Night was at hand, however, before the task was finished, and Lieutenant Fanning sent over word that the vessels had better

lie to near each other until morning, lest they should become separated in the darkness. This was done, but early the next morning, with a light breeze from the south, both vessels cleared away for Block Island, which was still fifty miles to the north.

There was no increase of wind during the forenoon, and at midday it died away to a mere cat's-paw, so the progress of the crafts was necessarily slow. In the afternoon, however, there was a change for the better, and about four o'clock the southeast point of the island was sighted. At the same moment also a brig was discovered standing down the east shore.

Signaling that he would crowd sail on the *Laughing Betty* and intercept her, Lieutenant Fanning left the schooner to follow in his wake, and sped off toward the stranger.

She proved to be a bomb-brig which had become separated from her consort, the frigate *Glasgow*, for which she was looking. Though larger than the *Betty*, she had but a single mortar, and a smaller complement of men. Possibly, too, she thought the schooner which was ap-

proaching was also an armed vessel. For these, or other reasons, she surrendered, without an engagement, and grappling with her, the sloop transferred her crew to her own hold, and put a prize crew of ten men upon her under the command of Boatswain Gray.

These arrangements had been completed by the time the *Lady Mary* arrived, and, escorting the two prizes, the *Laughing Betty* started to round the south end of the island, intending to run up into Long Island Sound. But the wind again died away, and for a second night she lay quietly on the sea, keeping her prizes within hail.

On the following morning, with high hopes of reaching New London in a few hours, the three vessels resumed their voyage. But as they passed by the southwest point of the isle a British frigate, which both Lieutenant Fanning and Midshipman Foster recognized as the *Glasgow*, came around the north end. Catching sight of the three craft, she immediately gave chase.

Both the schooner and the brig were near

enough for the lieutenant to shout out his his orders.

"Clear away for Montauk!" he commanded. "I will keep between you and the frigate. Perhaps you may escape;" then he pluckily turned to make a running fight, with a ship carrying four times his own number of guns.

The scene which Tom witnessed standing in the stern of the *Lady Mary*, for the next half-hour, was not unlike a conflict between a huge mastiff and a small terrier, wherein the little dog runs up towards its antagonist and barks, but when the big dog makes an attempt to close it turns and runs away.

Over and over again Lieutenant Fanning repeated these tactics, sending shot after shot at the frigate, damaging her slightly, but escaping all injury himself.

So interested was the midshipman in these movements of the sloop he did not notice the sea in front of his own vessel until a man forward called out:

"Fleet ahoy, sir, on our larboard!"

Then he turned to see the other vessels of the

squadron coming down towards him. The *Cabot* was in the lead, and advancing at a pace which would soon enable her to assist the *Laughing Betty*. A mile behind was the *Alfred*, crowding on all sail as though eager to take part in the fray, while the other members of the fleet, too far away to be of any practical help for at least a half-hour, were nevertheless making strenuous efforts to be in at the finish.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" the delighted lad shouted at the top of his lungs. "The frigate is ours!" and it certainly seemed so.

On by the schooner and the brig, in between the *Glasgow* and the plucky sloop, went the *Cabot*, every gun ready for instant action. In five minutes more the two frigates were pouring hot broadsides into each other.

Lieutenant Fanning, anxious to do his part towards crippling the Britisher, ran out of the cloud of smoke which floated down from the *Cabot*, and sheered around under the *Glasgow*'s stern. He had just reached a point where his guns would have raked her decks, when the flag-ship, now not a quarter of a mile off, sent

up a signal for him to withdraw from the fight. Believing the *Alfred* meant to take his place, he with regret fell back to make room for her.

To his surprise she now tacked around to the leeward of the *Cabot* and signaled her to withdraw from the engagement also. Her commander obeyed, and, without any further effort on the part of the Continentals to prevent her, the British frigate was allowed to escape.

There were at least three wrathy officers who followed Commodore Hopkins into Long Island Sound that morning. They were the captain of the *Cabot*, Lieutenant Fanning, and Midshipman Foster; and all were wrathy for the same reasons: They believed the *Glasgow* might have been captured, and that too without a damaging fight.

It also looked as though the executive officer of the flag-ship was in a similar frame of mind, for when asked some hours later why the vessels were ordered out of the engagement, he gave a peculiar shrug of his shoulders, and replied:

"The Commodore was afraid some one would get hurt."

In three hours the entire squadron entered the harbor of New London, whence despatches were forwarded to Philadelphia giving a full report of the cruise.

A few weeks passed, and then there came peremptory orders from the Naval Committee which broke up the fleet. Three of the frigates—the *Columbus*, the *Cabot*, and the *Andrea Doria* were directed to sail on independent cruises, while the *Alfred* was to go to New York under the command of her second lieutenant, Master Benjamin Seabury.

For her three senior officers there were separate commands. Commodore Hopkins and Captain Saltonstall were to repair to Philadelphia, where they were to appear before the Naval Committee and answer to charges of incompetency which had been preferred against them;* and Lieutenant Jones was to leave at once for Newport where a new vessel awaited his

*The result of this trial was the dismissal of Commodore Hopkins, and the censure of Captain Saltonstall.

command. As a special mark of commendation also he was allowed the privilege of choosing such officers and men of the *Alfred* as he wanted to serve with him on the new ship.

There was considerable excitement on the frigate when these tidings became known, and some speculation as to what men would be selected to accompany the senior lieutenant. There was, however, no surprise when it was announced that Lieutenant Fanning and Midshipmen Foster and Lyman had been chosen as the officers.

The former promptly accepted his appointment, but the two midshipmen were undecided, and for this reason: The post that morning brought a letter for Tom which read.

SALEM, MASS., *May the 1st, 1776.*

MIDSHIPMAN THOMAS FOSTER:

MY DEAR SIR:—

As you may have learned, the *Amos Bradford* survived the storm which scattered the fleet, and reached her destination in safety. But here is a piece of news you have not learned. I have bought out the other owners of the schooner, transformed her into a

brigantine, renamed her the *Ruthless* (because Ruth is to stay on shore with her grandmother), fitted her up with ten guns, and enlisted a crew of one hundred and twenty men. I have her commission as a privateer, and am ready to sail as soon as I can find two more officers. Your old friend Captain Lewis of the *Polly* consents to go as my first officer, and I offer you and your comrade Lyman the berths of second and third lieutenants respectively. It isn't exactly the same thing as the regular navy, but it will be of as much use to the cause, and I hope you and your shipmate will accept the places, especially since the Naval Committee have agreed to release you. Let me know as soon as possible your decision. Hoping it may be favorable,

I am yours truly,

CHARLES J. HATCH.

For three hours Tom and Sam debated the matter, the latter always concluding: "I will go where you do. So make up your mind quick."

Finally Lieutenant Jones himself was consulted.

"I shall hate to lose you, lads," he said, "but this is an unusual opportunity for your advance-

ment, one which would be long in coming in the regular navy, and if it were myself I should accept."

That decided it, and when two days later Lieutenants Jones and Fanning, and the nine men the former had selected to go with him, left for Newport, the two midshipmen accompanied them as far as Providence. Then they took the stage for Boston, where they delayed a single day to look over the town the British had so recently evacuated. From there they went on to Salem, where the *Ruthless* and a new career awaited them.

THE END.

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